

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization

BRIDGING TWO WORLDS:
NPCR Program Evaluation Final Report
for the First Three Years, 1993-94 to 1995-96

A CONSORTIUM PROJECT OF: Augsburg College; College of St. Catherine; Hamline University; Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs; Macalester College; Metropolitan State University; Minneapolis Community College; Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program; University of Minnesota (Center for Urban and Regional Affairs; Children, Youth and Family Consortium; Minnesota Extension Service); University of St. Thomas; and Minneapolis community and neighborhood representatives.

CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
330 Humphrey Center**

**BRIDGING TWO WORLDS:
NPCR Program Evaluation Final Report
for the First Three Years, 1993-94 to 1995-96**

by Patricia Gladchild

August 1996

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) is coordinated by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the University of Minnesota and is funded in part by an Urban Community Service grant administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

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LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM SUPERVISOR

August 1996

Dear Reader:

Supervision is always a responsibility, but in the case of the NPCR program, it is also a joy and a delight. To watch NPCR develop under the direction of the Coordinating Council and the dedication and experience of Kris Nelson has been a source of energy and great satisfaction.

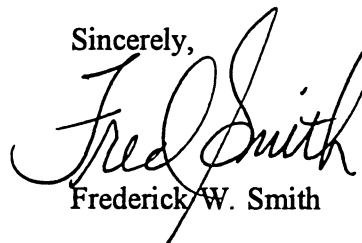
As the following report makes clear, NPCR over the past three years has grown, changed, and improved. Credit for much of the improvement in the program goes to Pat Gladchild and Connie Schmitz. Their detailed information about NPCR collected for the ongoing evaluation gave us all the material necessary to change the program in subtle but significant ways.

This report is Pat's final responsibility for NPCR. She leaves to complete her Ph.D. requirements. She goes with our best wishes for every success and our deep appreciation for all she has done for NPCR and for the community-wide effort of neighborhood revitalization in Minneapolis.

We welcome to NPCR Deb Smyre, who joins the staff as Administrative Associate. Deb will continue many of Pat's responsibilities as well as help Kris with some of the administrative duties.

On behalf of the Coordinating Council, the staff, and all the participants, we hope you find the following report informative and useful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fred Smith". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Frederick W. Smith

LETTER FROM THE PROJECT DIRECTOR

August 1996

Dear Reader:


Minneapolis neighborhood organizations will determine the future of the City! This is implied in the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), which gives neighborhoods more say in determining their future. NRP is based on the principle that the more residents are engaged in assessing needs and opportunities and planning, the more commitment, energy, and creativity will be marshalled to revitalize the community. Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) is proud to be part of this neighborhood movement. NPCR links the resources of Twin Cities universities to neighborhood organizations. The value of this linkage is evident not only in the 73 research projects supported by NPCR over the last three years, but also in the relationships that endure beyond each project. Students earnestly engage in neighborhood work and gain a greater understanding of the power of private citizens working together for the common good of their community.

The number of people who have given their time and energy to assure the success of NPCR is tremendous. I am grateful for the enthusiastic support that Twin Cities universities have given to NPCR. Members of the Coordinating Council have willingly given their time and energy to determine how university resources can best serve neighborhoods. Students have given dedication, new energy, and knowledgeable insights. Faculty have made their time and expertise available to advise students. Community mentors have volunteered their time to support students and the neighborhoods. University staff have set up new systems and procedures to deploy students and faculty. And most importantly, neighborhood organizations have welcomed university assistance and taught all participants.

Thanks also to our host, CURA (Center for Urban and Regional affairs) for incredible support and appreciation for the work of NPCR. Fred Smith provides wise counsel and challenges NPCR to reach beyond our objectives. Shirley Bennett deserves our gratitude for her management of the myriad details of NPCR's finances. I will miss Pat Gladchild's good will and detailed insights and understanding of NPCR as she leaves to pursue her studies.

I look forward to continuing to serve Minneapolis neighborhoods and the development of new partnerships between Twin Cities universities and neighborhoods.

Very truly,



Kris S. Nelson

SUMMARY

The Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) program provides applied research assistance to neighborhood organizations, usually in the form of a graduate or undergraduate student research assistant for a specified number of hours. Faculty-directed research is available for policy questions of concern across neighborhoods. The undeniable and impressive success of this young program offers a model which serves to bridge the two worlds of community organizations and academia, for even when there is goodwill between all parties, some mechanism is needed to get the resources of academia matched up with the needs of neighborhood groups, and that mechanism must be respectful of the requirements of both groups. NPCR is such a mechanism.

The idea of NPCR is refreshingly simple: provide sorely needed research assistance to neighborhood organizations through the abundant academic resources available in the Twin Cities. The administration of NPCR neighborhood research projects, however, is complex. NPCR benefits from being coordinated by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) because of its experience with community work and its good reputation among community activists. By and large, the process, though complex, works quite well when: 1) the control of the project and supervision of the student rests with the neighborhood organization, 2) each school supports its students, and 3) NPCR provides technical assistance to support each project. Two things which are of great importance to all of this are the consortium and the Coordinating Council. In order to bring academic resources to bear on urban problems with maximum impact, NPCR draws on not only inter-disciplinary but also inter-institutional exchange through the consortium. Without question, NPCR is strengthened by the contributions brought by the members of the consortium: Augsburg College, College of St. Catherine, Hamline University, Macalester College, Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis Community College, Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA), University of Minnesota (CURA; the Consortium for Children, Youth, and Families; Minnesota Extension Service), University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, and Minneapolis community representatives. All members of the consortium have a commitment to urban revitalization through community service. The Coordinating Council is the governing body of NPCR, and the formal mechanism through which the members of the consortium participate. It consists of representatives from each member of the consortium and meets quarterly, with subcommittees formed as needed.

The urgency of urban problems often presses upon citizens to take action, yet all too often it is difficult to gain an understanding of the problem either because of its complexity, or because the information is inaccessible, diffuse, or nonexistent, or both. In Minneapolis, citizens now have both the opportunity and the responsibility to make Neighborhood Revitalization Program action plans for their neighborhoods, working on a scale that is unfamiliar and sometimes overwhelming to them. NPCR not only provides research assistance which serves to answer questions people have about the issues they face in their neighborhood, it aims to do so in a way that alleviates rather than compounds the strain on capacity. One of the most important lessons learned through the operation of NPCR in its first three years is that initial assistance with proposal development, even when it leads to approval, is only the first stage of assistance needed by most neighborhood activists. Very often the proposal review committee makes constructive comments and suggestions for undertaking the project, which the project director then relays to

the neighborhood organization. In some cases, if the objective is still not sufficiently focused in the proposal, the review committee will tease out the part of the proposal that is either primary or necessary to the rest and fund that part rather than reject the proposal. In other cases, the review committee will find just one point unclear and again, rather than reject the proposal, instruct the project director to clear up the confusion then allow funding to go through. After proposal review, the development of the project continues when the student is hired and the project director meets with the student and neighborhood project supervisor to develop a work plan. The work plan aims to clarify roles, reach a common understanding of the objectives and activities, and discuss possible resources for the project. All this has shown that most neighborhood organizations need support in refining their project right up until it actually begins. This extended support is especially worthwhile because the experience of conducting an NPCR research project builds capacity to define and address problems, then acquire and apply outside resources.

The central commitment of NPCR is to foster applied neighborhood-driven research. To increase the likelihood that such research will successfully come to completion and actually bolster revitalization efforts, several kinds of assistance are provided. The first type is the advice and expertise offered by mentors. NPCR strives to provide each neighborhood research project with two mentors. The expectation is that the student will meet with each mentor at least three times during the project. A faculty mentor offers advice on research design and methodology. A community mentor directs the student to resources, contributes expertise on the issue being researched, and puts the project into perspective for the student. Many projects have been strongly supported by faculty and community mentors, though convincing students that their mentors are a resource beyond problem solving has been difficult. The second type of assistance is technical assistance. NPCR provides technical assistance to projects based on the individual needs of each neighborhood research goal. It may simply consist of referring them to a library or organization that can offer information or assistance. Two commonly used sources of assistance are Will Craig, the Assistant Director of CURA who advises on computer and specifically GIS sources, and the Minnesota Center for Survey Research, where consultations about survey design are available. The most visible source of technical assistance is the Community Computer Advisory Committee, which works to increase the capacity of neighborhood organizations to undertake revitalization and planning efforts through the use of electronic networks.

Follow-up on the first year projects has shown that the results of first year projects were positive beyond all expectations. Eighty-five percent of informants (in most cases project supervisors) described the research as useful two years later, and 40 percent said it was necessary, meaning that if an NPCR research assistant had not been available other means would have had to be found, though it was not at all clear to the informants what those other means would have been. In five cases (25 percent) the project was described as a catalyst for the organization, spurring neighborhood activity on a particular issue. In only three cases was the project described as not useful. Project supervisors, neighborhood activists, and students have all in general been extremely positive about NPCR. In exit questionnaires, all respondents, project supervisor and student alike, would recommend or highly recommend NPCR to another student or neighborhood organization.

In addition to the neighborhood-led student projects, Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) solicits two faculty-directed research projects each year as a means for both

fostering community-based research and providing community groups with information useful to their work. The topics must have broad application across Minneapolis neighborhoods and address important public policy concerns or governmental practices that affect the ability of Minneapolis neighborhoods to successfully undertake revitalization activities. Much of the activity in this area has been focused on developing a process for soliciting faculty research that is responsive to problems identified by neighborhood groups and open to including community participants. This has proved to be an elusive goal. While finding a satisfactory process for soliciting faculty research has been a frustration, the faculty projects which have been undertaken have exceeded the goals set for them. The success of these projects shows that finding a way through the institutional obstacles and differences between faculty and community needs is an important and promising undertaking. NPCR has funded six faculty research projects, which is on target for the completion of our third program year.

An aspect of NPCR that extends beyond each project is the goal of distributing information among community activists in order to break down the isolation that frequently plagues neighborhood groups, resulting in continuously "reinventing the wheel." This is accomplished not only through placing the project reports in the CURA library and on Free-Net, but also through periodic workshops open to anyone who works in their community. These workshops evolved out of both neighborhood and faculty research projects, and they bring in representatives of other groups who can speak to the issue, such as Citizens for a Better Environment or the Homebased Business Association of Minnesota. The specific goal of NPCR is to conduct four workshops per program year. In addition, on March 8, 1996, NPCR held a conference entitled "Research for Change." The purpose of the conference was to present NPCR as a model for community-based research which effectively addresses pressing urban problems faced by community groups, and to discuss such undertakings more generally. The results of the conference were encouraging. Many participants were impressed simply by the mixed group of attenders, and the practical, positive tone of the discussions. More concrete outcomes of the conference were: 1) a mailing list of faculty, community activists, and students who are committed to community-based education and research, 2) follow-up meetings held to begin ongoing discussions of the creation of a network for those interested in community-based research, and 3) funding from the Minneapolis Foundation to create an exchange of university research resources and community research needs, modeled after the network initiated by Occidental College for Los Angeles area communities.

In conclusion, NPCR staff and participants have learned that an NPCR neighborhood research project is likely to be successful if it has: a need/issue/problem identified as necessary to revitalization by the neighborhood organization; multiple opportunities to shape and clarify the project to meet the neighborhood's needs; the responsibility for selecting the student research assistant placed with the neighborhood organization; a plan developed by the project supervisor, the student, and the NPCR project director to clarify the responsibilities and desired outcomes; a clear, written description of all participants' respective roles and responsibilities distributed to all concerned at the beginning of the project; support for student researchers through the recruitment of both community and faculty mentors; a mid-project "check-in" by NPCR staff to find out how the project is progressing according to the work plan, with staff otherwise remaining available for consultation only when asked; a write-up or project report completed and made available to inform future projects.

INTRODUCTION

This report brings the formative evaluation of the Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) program to conclusion. The undeniable and impressive success of this young program not only allowed but prompted the evaluation to expand beyond its initial purpose. Rather than only examining the effectiveness of NPCR in meeting its objectives, the evaluation became an effort to describe and understand NPCR as a model program which serves to bridge the two worlds of community organizations and academia. Even when there is goodwill between all parties, some mechanism is needed to get the resources of academia matched up with the needs of neighborhood groups, and that mechanism must be respectful of the requirements of both groups. NPCR is such a mechanism. Though the original intent of the evaluation was to provide information to those who run and use the program, the audience has expanded to include anyone interested in applied community-based research.

This report contains: descriptions of the components of NPCR, lessons learned by participants during the first three years, indications of areas that would benefit from further examination, and ample appendices containing data collected from the first proposal review in December 1993 through June 1996. The report is organized by components of NPCR in order make it easier for people to focus on what is of greatest interest to them.

A central part of the formative evaluation has been listening to participants and collecting their observations and advice through interviews, conversations, and questionnaires. Throughout the text of this report you will find their voices. It is of utmost importance that the reader attend to these comments, for they are what has determined the shape and operation of NPCR. The results of the exit questionnaires, presented in Appendices E (p. 55) and F (p. 69), are also illuminating and should be examined by those who wish to understand the views of NPCR project supervisors and student research assistants.

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OVERVIEW OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

The Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) program provides applied research assistance to neighborhood organizations, usually in the form of a graduate or undergraduate student research assistant for a specified number of hours. Faculty-directed research is available for policy questions of concern across neighborhoods. Since its inception in October 1993, NPCR has been convincing in its demonstration that collaboration among faculty, students, neighborhood activists, and administrators working for the revitalization of neighborhoods throughout the city is an extremely valuable addition to the resources available for urban revitalization. NPCR offers neighborhood organizations access to the wealth of academic resources in the Twin Cities in order to address issues of concern to them, and in order to gain a better understanding of local conditions and dynamics at a time when crucial decisions are being made about the future of Minneapolis neighborhoods. Through NPCR, colleges and universities are engaged in applied community-based research which addresses pressing questions about urban life. At the same time, students and faculty broaden their research skills and build on areas of substantive expertise. Students at all levels of higher education have been challenged and inspired by the meaningful contributions they are asked to make as they use their critical thinking and research skills for community work. And this is all accomplished for a modest investment.

NPCR is one of the urban university programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education Urban Community Service Program under Title XI of the Higher Education Act. Currently in its third program year, NPCR received a federal grant originally for five years, renewable annually, with potential funding of \$1.2 million.¹ Though the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) at the University of Minnesota has the primary responsibility for the administration of this program, success depends on the members of the governing consortium: Augsburg College, the College of St. Catherine, Hamline University, Macalester College, Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis Community College, the Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs, the University of Minnesota (Center for Urban and Regional Affairs; Children, Youth and Family Consortium; Minnesota Extension Service), the University of St. Thomas, the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, and various community representatives.

The formation of NPCR was particularly timely for Minneapolis. Each of its eighty-one neighborhoods has been challenged by the City to develop a plan for the next twenty years through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). Established in 1990, NRP presents the opportunity for unprecedented collaboration between city and county agencies, and citizens. The City has committed \$20 million a year for the next twenty years to help fund this initiative. A considerable problem that has emerged for neighborhood organizations as they have begun working on plans for their communities, however, is that they often do not have good information about the problems and conditions they face, much less resources to thoroughly investigate possible solutions. Without sufficient information it is difficult for these smaller organizations to move forward with confidence. Recognition of this problem gave rise to the goals of NPCR:

The primary goal of NPCR is to improve the capacity of Minneapolis neighborhood organizations to

¹Due to recent actions in Congress, future funding is uncertain at this time.

make informed and effective use of the opportunity presented by the NRP by providing research assistance which is tailored to neighborhood needs.

The secondary goal of NPCR is to provide faculty and students of local postsecondary educational institutions with useful, neighborhood-based applied research and learning opportunities.

NPCR solicits research proposals for specific projects from neighborhood organizations throughout Minneapolis. The problem to be researched is defined by the neighborhood organization, with assistance in proposal development provided by the project director, as appropriate to the diverse needs of the varied neighborhood organizations. NRP staff review the proposal to offer comments, note resources that may be available outside NPCR, and to suggest opportunities for collaboration. The proposals are reviewed three times a year by a rotating subcommittee of representatives from the governing consortium and funded based on criteria that determine clarity, manageability of the project, and its relevance to neighborhood revitalization.

Once a proposal is funded and the project designated as appropriate for a graduate or undergraduate student, the paid research assistantship is posted at all of the participating schools. The neighborhood organization interviews students from the pool of applicants and selects the research assistant. The students are paid through the school they attend, but they must contact the NPCR project director to get on the payroll. At the onset of the research, the project director meets with the neighborhood project supervisor and the research assistant to develop a work plan. The neighborhood organization has sole responsibility for supervision of the student and overall direction for the project. Each project is assigned both a community and a faculty mentor to help the student throughout the project. While these positions support the student's academic program, the primary responsibility is to the neighborhood organization. When the project is completed, a final report is placed in the CURA library and made available electronically on the Twin Cities Free-Net. (See Figures 1 and 2, pp. 5 and 6.) Additionally, in order to ensure that information from the research projects gets circulated throughout the Twin Cities, NPCR sponsors at least four workshops per year based on completed neighborhood projects. Research is selected for a workshop when the topic is likely to be of interest to community leaders throughout the metropolitan area. As of June 30, 1996, seventy-three neighborhood research projects have been funded for a total of 22,975 hours. Of these, 52 (71 percent) have been completed (see Table 1, p. 39).

In addition to the research conducted by students, NPCR funds two faculty-directed research projects every program year. Grants for faculty research include up to two months faculty salary plus the equivalent of one half-time graduate student assistant for nine months. These projects are negotiated between faculty and involved citizens, and address public policy issues that are of current concern across neighborhoods. Six faculty projects have been funded, and three of these have been completed. (See p. 27 for further information on faculty research projects.)

NPCR PROCESS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS

- 1) Neighborhood organization identifies an issue or concern.**
- 2) Neighborhood representative contacts the project director to discuss proposal and initiate assistance with proposal development.**
- 3) Neighborhood organization submits a proposal.**
(Three times per year on an academic schedule.)
- 4) Proposal is reviewed by Coordinating Council review committee.**
(Number of hours and graduate/undergraduate student determined.)
- 5) Job description is posted at all eight participating colleges and universities.**
- 6) Students apply directly to the neighborhood organization.**
- 7) Neighborhood organization selects a student.**
- 8) Project director meets with the student and project supervisor to develop a work plan.**
- 9) Community and faculty mentors are recruited.**
- 10) Project is completed.**
- 11) Report is placed in the CURA library and published online on Free-Net.**

Figure 1: NPCR Process for Neighborhood Projects

NPCR PARTICIPANTS IN NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS

- 1) **Consortium members**
 Augsburg College, Hamline University, College of St. Catherine, Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs, Macalester College, Minneapolis Community College, Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, University of Minnesota (CURA; Children, Youth and Family Consortium; Minnesota Extension Service), University of St. Thomas, and Minneapolis community and neighborhood representatives.
- 2) **Governing Coordinating Council**
- 3) **Minneapolis neighborhood volunteers and staff**
- 4) **Neighborhood project supervisors**
- 5) **Graduate and undergraduate students**
- 6) **Community mentors**
- 7) **Faculty mentors**
- 8) **Program supervisor**
 (Fred Smith)
- 9) **Project director**
 (Kris Nelson)
- 10) **Research and Evaluation Coordinator**
 (Pat Gladchild)

Figure 2: NPCR Participants in Neighborhood Projects

ADMINISTRATION

The idea of NPCR is refreshingly simple: provide sorely needed research assistance to neighborhood organizations through the abundant academic resources available in the Twin Cities. The administration of NPCR neighborhood research projects, however, is complex. Drawing on the strengths of many institutions and providing their services to the varied and numerous neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis strains the resources of a small staff. Different schools have different schedules, different methods for paying students, different ways to use the experiences for academic credit, and different levels and kinds of student support. Neighborhood organizations have altogether different timetables, widely varying levels of experience in hiring and supervising students, are in different stages of the NRP process, and are almost always subject to heavy work loads and high turnover in volunteers and staff.

NPCR is the mechanism which coordinates the process of bridging these two worlds and opening doors for neighborhood organizations and academic institutions alike. Through trial and error a schedule that accommodates everyone reasonably well has been established, and once the first student goes through the payroll at each school the kinks get worked out and the process flows more smoothly. In addition, NPCR benefits from being coordinated by the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) because of its experience with community work and its good reputation among community activists. By and large, the process works quite well when: 1) the control of the project and supervision of the student rests with the neighborhood organization, 2) each school supports its students, and 3) NPCR provides technical assistance to support each project. Two things which are of great importance to all of this are the consortium and the Coordinating Council.

THE CONSORTIUM

In order to bring academic resources to bear on urban problems with maximum impact, NPCR draws on not only inter-disciplinary but also inter-institutional exchange through the consortium. Without question, NPCR is strengthened by the contributions brought by the members of the consortium: Augsburg College, College of St. Catherine, Hamline University, Macalester College, Metropolitan State University, Minneapolis Community College, Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA), University of Minnesota (CURA; the Consortium for Children, Youth, and Families; Minnesota Extension Service), University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, and Minneapolis community representatives. All members of the consortium have a commitment to urban revitalization through community service. (For descriptions of participating institutions, see Appendix A, p. 37.) Additionally, the combination of community and educational representatives results in a learning process for both as well as linkages between community groups and academic institutions.

There is reason, however, to review membership the consortium and consider the performance and participation of each institution. The number of students recruited and hired varies considerably between institutions (see Appendix D, p. 50). Some schools, such as Macalester College (which has had 43 applicants and 16 hires), are obviously an extremely good match for NPCR since their students often have had prior community experience and benefit from a career development office which is very active and

visible. On the other hand, Minneapolis Community College has had only one applicant and no hires, indicating that something is not working for NPCR at that institution. Either the word is not getting out, or these positions are not appropriate for community college students. This is a particularly opportune time to review the responsibilities and participation of consortium members since efforts are underway to make the NPCR model of research assistance available to community groups in St. Paul, which may result in the constitution of the consortium changing somewhat.

THE COORDINATING COUNCIL

The Coordinating Council is the governing body of NPCR, and the formal mechanism through which the members of the consortium participate. It consists of representatives from each member of the consortium, as well as Kris Nelson, the NPCR project director, Fred Smith, Coordinator for Community Development for CURA and NPCR program supervisor, plus representatives from neighborhood organizations throughout Minneapolis. The Coordinating Council meets quarterly to provide direction for the program and guidance for the project director.

The complex administrative structure of NPCR requires the support and structure of the Coordinating Council. As with any committee, the commitment shown by various members differs, but most members contribute in some way, and those contributions are essential to the health of NPCR. Representatives of higher education are responsible for the promotion of NPCR assistantships at their school, recruitment of students, and aiding the project director in locating faculty mentors for specific research projects. They also administer payment to student researchers. NRP/CARE staff refer neighborhood organizations to NPCR when appropriate, and review initial proposals in order to comment on their appropriateness and value to revitalization endeavors. Neighborhood representatives are responsible for recruiting community mentors for approved projects, and for bringing the experience and perspective of neighborhood organizations to the Coordinating Council. An important service Coordinating Council members provide is sitting on the proposal review committee, which meets three times a year. While attendance at quarterly meetings has been erratic and subject to severe scheduling restrictions, subcommittees, such as the proposal review committee and the conference planning committee, have worked very well and should continue to be used as needed. In addition, there is a tension between stability and change on the Coordinating Council. The practice thus far has been to change representatives only when circumstances require a member to leave. It would be useful to consider terms for Coordinating Council representatives in order to educate more people about NPCR, offer new people an opportunity to make contributions, and keep the effort creative and vigorous.

NEIGHBORHOOD RESEARCH PROJECTS

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

The urgency of urban problems often presses upon citizens to take action, yet all too often it is difficult to gain an understanding of the problem either because of its complexity, or because the information is inaccessible, diffuse, or nonexistent, or both. In Minneapolis, citizens now have both the opportunity and the responsibility to make plans for their neighborhoods on a scale that is unfamiliar and sometimes overwhelming to them. NPCR not only provides research assistance which serves to answer questions people have about the issues they face in their neighborhood, it aims to do so in a way that alleviates rather than compounds the strain on capacity. In addition, the experience of conducting an NPCR research project builds capacity to define and address problems, then acquire and apply outside resources.

The primary responsibility of the project director is to assist neighborhood organizations with the definition, focus, and presentation of their research proposals. Because developing research projects is a new and unfamiliar activity for most neighborhood organizations, the project director helps all applicants who wish to submit a proposal to NPCR (except in the unusual case of a proposal that turns up for consideration without any prior contact from the neighborhood organization). This assistance ranges from intensive meetings and extended conversations to simply reviewing a draft of the proposal and giving suggestions for improvement, depending on what the neighborhood representatives need. The kind of help required most often is narrowing the topic and focusing the project (see Appendix E, p. 57). Of the questionnaire respondents who received help from the project director, 26 percent considered it useful, and 74 percent rated it as very useful (see Appendix E, p. 56). The benefits of this support are also evident in the fact that two proposals were originally denied funding, then revised under the guidance of the project director, resubmitted, and approved. Other results of this support are increased trust of the program as demonstrated by repeat applications, and increased confidence and competence in using academic resources on the part of neighborhood activists and staff. In addition, this guidance pays off when neighborhood organizations show increased independence in submitting subsequent proposals after having a good experience and obtaining important information from their first project.

One of the most important lessons learned through the operation of NPCR in its first three years is that initial assistance with proposal development, even when it leads to approval, is only the first stage of assistance needed by most neighborhood activists. Very often the proposal review committee makes constructive comments and suggestions for undertaking the project, which the project director then relays to the neighborhood organization. In some cases, if the objective is still not sufficiently focused in the proposal, the review committee will tease out the part of the proposal that is either primary or necessary to the rest and fund that part rather than reject the proposal. In other cases, the review committee will find just one point unclear and again, rather than reject the proposal, instruct the project director to clear up the confusion then allow funding to go through. After proposal review, the development of the project continues when the student is hired and the project director meets with the student and neighborhood project supervisor to develop a work plan. The work plan aims to clarify roles, reach a common understanding of the objectives and activities, and discuss possible resources for the project. All this has shown that most

neighborhood organizations need support in refining their project right up until it actually begins. Sometimes it even continues after that with the student pressing the organization to clarify objectives. Note that 41 percent of student respondents described the neighborhood organization's objective as not clear (see Appendix F, p. 71). When project supervisors were asked what advice they would give to another supervisor, 40 percent said to set clear and realistic goals (see Appendix E, p. 59). It has become quite evident that ongoing assistance with narrowing, clarifying and focusing research while maintaining respect for the neighborhood organization's ownership of the project is a crucial part of the services provided by NPCR.

Everything worked out fine. And I am sure I could have called if there were any problems. Help was there right from the very beginning when we started putting proposals together. That was what we needed, help from the very beginning. [neighborhood project supervisor]

APPROVED PROJECTS

Since the first proposal review round in December 1993 through June 1996, 90 neighborhood proposals have been submitted for funding, 73 (81 percent) of which were approved for a total of 22,975 hours funded. This included 33 graduate student positions and 40 positions for undergraduates. The positions ranged from 30 to 960 hours, with an average of 315 hours per project (see Appendix B, p. 39).

The issues addressed by the funded proposals reflect both a concern with the fundamental aspects of neighborhood vitality and an expanding awareness of the kinds of projects that may be useful to neighborhood revitalization. Housing and economic development are the most common issues addressed, followed by the environment and crime and safety. The types of projects have expanded to include new topics, such as the role of arts in neighborhood revitalization, as well as creative approaches to long standing urban problems, such as research on home-based businesses as a part of local economic planning in inner-city neighborhoods (see Appendix B, p. 42 for a list of issues addressed; for descriptions of neighborhood research projects, see Appendix G, p. 79).

Thirty-four neighborhood organizations representing 41 of Minneapolis's 81 neighborhoods have received an NPCR student to assist with research. Sixteen of these 34 organizations have had one NPCR project, and 18 have had two or more. Seventeen (42 percent) of the neighborhoods funded were protection neighborhoods, or stable, fundamentally sound neighborhoods. Since there are 38 protection neighborhoods in Minneapolis, NPCR has provided assistance to 45 percent of protection neighborhoods. Ten (24 percent) of the neighborhoods funded are redirection neighborhoods, an NRP designation indicating that the neighborhood has extensive problems. Since there are 15 redirection neighborhoods, this is two-thirds of redirection neighborhoods. This is not surprising since one would expect that neighborhoods with more problems would need more assistance. This is further illustrated by the fact 38 percent of the projects funded have been for redirection neighborhoods while 29 percent have been for protection neighborhoods (see Appendix C, p. 43).

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SATISFACTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPANTS

People from neighborhood organizations have reported that there are limits to what volunteers can do, and NRP efforts have strained the resources of most neighborhoods. Some projects require a level of detailed investigation that is difficult to get from people who are working as volunteers. Project supervisors and members of neighborhood organizations have been extremely positive about NPCR research assistance as a way to alleviate this problem. According to exit questionnaires and interviews, most supervisors were very satisfied with the assistance from the project director, found the pool of applicants to be good, considered the results of the project to be useful, and viewed their project as a means of spurring the neighborhood on to action. This satisfaction is central to the success of NPCR.

If the neighborhood feels empowerment as a result of these projects, then that's success. That is the real test. [Coordinating Council member]

The primary purpose [of NPCR] is assisting neighborhood organizations, so the success will depend on whether they got that, did that happen. [Coordinating Council member]

Eighty-three percent of questionnaire respondents would strongly recommend NPCR to another neighborhood organization, and another 17 percent would recommend it. No respondents said that they would not recommend NPCR. The performance of the students was assessed as being very good. Sixty-three percent of project supervisors said that they were very satisfied with the performance of their student, and 27 percent said they were satisfied. The final products were considered useful to the organizations' revitalization activities by 98 percent of project supervisors. (For exit questionnaire results, see Appendix E, p. 55.) Three students (two undergraduate and one graduate) were subsequently hired by neighborhood organizations.

74 *I am very happy with the research and this report. Having a report like this translates the lofty, vague goals of the NRP into a project the public can understand. I feel we have had a professional assessment of neighborhood housing. [neighborhood project supervisor]*

Our student was talented, hard-working, and versatile in dealing with a variety of people. [neighborhood project supervisor]

6 *This is the biggest chunk of our NRP plan. It is about a third of our NRP money. It is a very technical project and I didn't have time. . . . We would still be floundering if we had not had this help. This is really the kind of help neighborhood organizations need: technical assistance. [neighborhood project supervisor]*

It was very helpful to work full-time with someone on a specific question. [neighborhood project supervisor]

When asked what advice they would give to another project supervisor, respondents said it is important to set clear and realistic goals, make time to work closely with the student, and establish regular

contact with the student. Problems that were reported include unfamiliarity with hiring procedures² and supervising a research project.³ As in any situation the involved hiring people, NPCR projects have run into problems, but NPCR staff have done everything possible to take action to get the project completed. In two cases in which the student was terminated, NPCR found another student in the applicant pool who was available and could complete the project successfully. One project supervisor noted frankly that along with the need for research help comes the need for administrative help. The temptation to use student researchers for office duties is impossible to resist in some cases, even though the purpose of NPCR is to provide research assistance.

²On average, it takes two months from proposal approval to making a hiring decision for graduate student positions, and three months for undergraduate students.

³NPCR confronted this problem directly by supporting a project to compile a personnel handbook for neighborhood organizations. "Personnel and Organization Management Manual for Minneapolis Neighborhood Organizers" was completed in December 1995 and is available in the CURA library (NPCR 1026).

TIPS FOR NPCR PROJECT SUPERVISORS
(Advice given by previous project supervisors)

The hiring process can easily turn out to be more time-consuming than expected. Don't let this surprise you. Asking applicants for writing samples or other relevant materials can be helpful when appropriate.

NPCR student research assistants are expected to work independently, and most of them find this to be rewarding; however, there are limits to their independence. Even the best students cannot meet the needs of the neighborhood organization without being given clear objectives at the beginning and constructive feedback throughout the project.

Projects with realistic expectations as well as clearly defined parameters and goals are the most successful.

The person who is going to directly supervise the student should have the final authority to select the researcher.

Setting up regular times to meet with the research assistant throughout the project is often helpful in keeping the project on schedule and the paths of communication open.

Do your best to anticipate supports the project will need (computer access, printed materials, mailing lists, etc.). Having them ready can prevent the project from getting slowed down.

The students are better able to stay focused on the objective if they understand the context of the research and the intended use of their results. Fill them in on the relevant background as much as you can, and share the organization's vision with them. If they know why they are working on a project it will result in a better product.

Depending on the project, supervising research can be a bit unsettling because the student is out and about, making it difficult to know how they are using their time or what they are producing. To help make sure the progress of the project is understood by everyone concerned, it is very useful for neighborhood people to review pieces of the work as it progresses. This also guards against unexpected turns in the direction of the project and gives the research assistant a chance to ask questions and get feedback.

Encourage the students to make use of their community and faculty mentors. These advisors are intended to be resource people for the project; consulting with them is part of the student's job and should be thought of as an important part of the development of the project.

Figure 3: Tips for NPCR Project Supervisors

FOLLOW-UP ON YEAR ONE PROJECTS

Since NPCR seeks to provide *applied* community-driven research, it is of utmost interest to ask how the projects are actually used after the student's appointment ends and the neighborhood organization moves on with its revitalization work. In order to find out how projects were being used, follow-up on the first year projects was conducted as part of the evaluation, and the results were positive beyond all expectations.

In June 1996, telephone interviews were conducted to determine the usefulness of projects conducted during Year One (10/93-9/94). Interviews were successfully completed for 20 (91 percent) of the 22 Year One projects. Eighty-five percent of informants (in most cases project supervisors) described the research as useful two years later, and 40 percent said it was necessary, meaning that if an NPCR research assistant had not been available other means would have had to be found, though it was not at all clear to the informants what those other means would have been. In five cases (25 percent) the project was described as a catalyst for the organization, spurring neighborhood activity on a particular issue. In only three cases was the project not useful. In one the student did not complete the project due to personal problems, and in another the student was not compatible with the organization. In the third the project was simply forgotten, even though the student was actually hired by the organization as an organizer. In this case there was no written report, so that when the student moved on the information went with her.

The information resulting from the research projects was reported to be used in a number of ways: as a baseline of information for decision-making, for advocacy or organizing, general planning, to set up a program, or given directly to a consultant for the neighborhood (for follow-up results, see Appendix H, p. 91). Descriptions of the effects and applications of some of the projects from NPCR's first year follow. (For descriptions of all NPCR neighborhood research projects, see Appendix G, p. 79.)

Home-based business studies were initiated in NPCR's first proposal review round. The review committee supported a project for the Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association with a graduate research assistant to identify home-based businesses in the area and survey them to find out what their needs are. Marcy-Holmes was in its NRP planning stages, and though some residents believed that home-based businesses were an important part of the local economy, people were reluctant to commit NRP funds without documentation. This type of survey had never been done before, so a big part of the project was determining how to locate home-based businesses and developing a basic methodology. As a result of the research, the neighborhood association set aside \$10,000 of its NRP money to develop an organization to serve home-based businesses in the area. In April 1996 the Southeast Homebased Business Association was incorporated to serve as a voice and advocacy group, and there are currently 90 people on its mailing list. In addition, this project served as a catalyst and role model for other neighborhoods, and NPCR has now funded similar surveys of home-based business in four other neighborhoods. Since this has clearly emerged as a research need for neighborhood organizations, the most recent home-based business project supported by NPCR includes extra hours for the student to create a manual for conducting such surveys which will then be made available to interested groups. Though the surveys usually locate only about 25 home-based businesses, as the Marcy-Holmes example demonstrates, hearing from this small group of

entrepreneurs changes the way neighborhood organizations think about their local economic resources and facilitates awareness and organizing.

Corridor studies have helped neighborhood organizations get a handle on how to approach the issue of redeveloping declining commercial corridors. NPCR supported two such projects in its first year. One was for the Hennepin Avenue Task Force, whose research assistant played a part not only in preparing the materials and data consultants would need to begin planning for the project, but also in the selection of the consultant team hired by the group. In Powderhorn Park, an NPCR student did a survey of businesses along Lake Street, and this research got the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association started on its Lake Street revitalization effort in earnest because they found out what the business community was thinking. Learning that there is faith in Lake Street, and that there are common interests between residents and business made collaboration possible. Such collaboration is essential to rebuilding Lake Street.

Housing projects were prominent in NPCR's first year. The outcome of research on the feasibility of a housing trust for Stevens Square was straightforward and significant; the research demonstrated that it would not be useful in that neighborhood, directing housing efforts to focus on more fruitful endeavors. In Field, Regina, Northrup a survey was conducted by an undergraduate student to find out what residents' home repair needs are. The information was used to design a home repair loan program, which is the largest component of their NRP plan. The program has been implemented, with the first loans expected to go out the summer of 1996. A fairly technical project was conducted in the East Harriet Farmstead neighborhood, where they needed research assistance on creating a revolving loan fund as part of the neighborhood plan. The program has since been set up, with the design based on the information provided by the report. The neighborhood organization has actually started make loans to neighborhood residents. In the Jordan neighborhood research has helped efforts get underway to develop a loan program for rental property. Since there is no model the organization can simply apply to the neighborhood, the student did the legwork to find out who to talk to, what resources are available, and what the appropriate contacts at land trusts and loan programs are, so residents can now move forward and determine what they think will work best in their community.

The Southeast Industrial Area Economic Development Plan was the largest project funded in Year One, with 960 graduate student hours committed. This was a two-phase project, with the first providing a comprehensive base of information for planning, and the second convening focus groups comprised of various people with an interest in the area. This project resulted the recognition by city, county, and state agencies that this area is a viable area for development. It demonstrated that an urban area can compete with the suburbs and retain industrial and heavy commercial business. It also resulted in the formation of the Southeast Economic Development Steering Committee which has continued to meet regularly to develop a master plan for the area. This was particularly significant because the various groups affected by this area have a history of contention and had not worked together for many years prior to this effort. The Request for Proposals which was distributed in order to get consultant services for urban design was a direct result of the work done by NPCR research assistants.

NPCR STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Students from all of the consortium schools provide the bulk of the labor for NPCR. NPCR neighborhood research assistance is provided by undergraduate and graduate students who are selected by the neighborhood organization. These paid positions⁴ offer students a broad range of applied research experience working on current issues of concern in urban areas. The positions carry a lot of responsibility and in general are significantly more substantial than typical internships.

What makes [these jobs] so attractive is that they are tied to specific projects and needs rather than tied to duties. A big fear is that internships often become clerical, or that students don't have something to do. But with NPCR, neighborhoods are coming up with something that needs to be done. [Coordinating Council member]

The research projects may be used to fulfill research and/or internship requirements in both undergraduate and graduate degree programs (20 percent of NPCR students have done so), but this is left up to the student. The projects require students who are self-motivated, well-organized, have a commitment to community work, and are able to work well with volunteers.

[Our students] were self-directed and this was critical. If we had to micro-manage it wouldn't have worked. They fit with us and once they had parameters for the projects, they could execute it. [neighborhood project supervisor]

There have been 279 applicants for the 70 filled positions, indicating that students do consider these kinds of jobs to be desirable. Seventy-three students have held NPCR positions in the first three years (36 graduate, 37 undergraduate). (See Appendix D, p. 49.)

NPCR confronts two ongoing challenges in recruiting students.⁵ The first is promoting jobs in a way that attracts students of color. Neighborhood staff people have reported that they would like to see more students of color in the applicant pools, and this is a goal of NPCR itself. Thirteen percent of hires have been students of color, which is comparable to other programs in higher education, but still leaves room for improvement (see Appendix D, p. 51). This goal requires the involvement of numerous staff members at all the participating schools, and at agencies which serve particular groups. In one case the neighborhood organization specifically requested a Hmong student to work on a public health issue with Hmong residents. The position was successfully filled, but it took several months and much focused effort on the part of the project director. The student was finally recruited not through any of the schools' cultural centers, but through the Hmong American Partnership, a community-based mutual assistance organization. Since limited staff resources make this level of effort for every position impossible, other means must be found to increase the diversity of applicants if this goal is ever to be reached.

⁴The current rate of pay is \$8.35/hour for undergraduate students and \$10.88/hour for graduate students.

⁵NPCR has done fairly well in its recruitment and hiring of female students. While 45 percent of applicants and 48 percent of hires have been female. For further information, see Appendix D, Tables 11 and 12.

The second challenge in recruitment is increasing the number of undergraduate students who apply. While there has been great success in finding students of outstanding ability to fill undergraduate positions, when there are numerous jobs posted simultaneously the number of applicants gets low in relation to the need, and organizations that have delays in hiring have a hard time filling their positions. This is supported by the fact that it takes three months from proposal review to hiring for undergraduate students, but only two months for graduate student positions (see Appendix B, p. 40). Project supervisors have complained that the undergraduate applicant pool is of high quality but too small. All it takes to satisfy a neighborhood need is one student, but when the neighborhood organizations feel they have to settle for less than what they need for a good project, then the options need to be expanded for them. Recruitment is the responsibility of members of the Coordinating Council, and is something that should be stressed and improved, depending on the record at the various institutions.

SATISFACTION OF THE STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

By and large, students have been excited and stimulated by their NPCR research experiences. Their appraisal of the projects is a little more critical than that of neighborhood project supervisors, but is very positive nonetheless. In addition to financial assistance, the projects not only serve to prepare them for employment,⁶ but also enhance their education in significant ways. This occurs even though there is no explicit structure designed to define what students are expected to gain from the experience, or to guide them toward any goal other than serving the neighborhood organization. All students who completed an exit questionnaire would recommend an NPCR assistantship to a friend, and most (78 percent) would strongly recommend one. Students consistently reported that they felt respected by the people in the neighborhood organizations, and most reported in interviews that they found the experience to be enjoyable and worthwhile. Questionnaire results show that when offered a chance to make unspecified open-ended comments, 65 percent of those who commented said that their assistantship was a great experience. (For exit questionnaire results, see Appendix F, p. 69.)

*It was a great match because it taught me a lot but I got to operate out of what I did know. . . .
I gained a lot beyond the salary. [research assistant]*

*I absolutely loved it. I thought it was exactly what students need to help them discover the
practical relevance of their academics. [research assistant]*

*I personally thought that my internship was one of the best learning experiences I have had. I
think the strengths were a clear goal for the intern to reach with the needed guidance, and in my
case, the opportunity to work with very gifted people. [research assistant]*

*I felt really good about [the job]. People in the neighborhood are asking for [my report], and
the neighborhood organization is using it already. The project definitely had an impact on the
neighborhood. [research assistant]*

⁶As noted elsewhere in the report, three NPCR research assistants were hired as permanent staff by the neighborhood organization.

NPCR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The ***student research assistant*** is responsible for conducting the research and providing the neighborhood organization with the specified product. It is expected that the student will be self-motivated, and that he or she will stay in regular communication with the project supervisor. Though the project may entail performing a small amount of related clerical tasks, the focus of the student's activities should be on the research project. The research assistant should keep the needs of the neighborhood organization and the purpose of the research foremost in their minds throughout the project.

The ***neighborhood project supervisor*** provides ongoing guidance for the student and makes sure he or she is getting the support needed to successfully complete the project. In some neighborhoods the student is accountable to the project supervisor, while in others there is a committee or board to which the student reports. It is important to the success of the project to clarify the lines of accountability and support at the onset of the research. The neighborhood organization is responsible for giving the research assistant clear objectives. No matter how motivated and independent the research assistant may be, it is impossible for them to give the neighborhood what they need without a clear explanation of the history and purpose of the project and the objectives that need to be met.

The ***mentors*** should be considered a resource not only for the student, but for the neighborhood organization, since their input will strengthen the final product. The expectation is that the student will meet with each mentor at least three times during the project. This should be considered a part of the responsibilities of the job. A ***faculty mentor*** offers advice on research design, methodology, and current literature that is relevant to the topic. This mentor is often the student's advisor, but it need not be. If a student wishes to work with a faculty member that is new to them, that can be explored. A ***community mentor*** directs the student to resources, and contributes expertise on the issue being researched. This mentor puts the project into an overall context for the student.

Kris Nelson (625-1020) is the ***NPCR project director***, and his primary responsibility is to assist neighborhood organizations with the development of their research proposals and work plans. Kris acts as a liaison between the various institutions that participate in NPCR, and oversees administration of the program. He is also responsible for organizing workshops, and oversees the use of the Twin Cities Free-Net as a means for distributing NPCR reports.

Figure 4: Roles and Responsibilities

TIPS FOR NPCR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
(Advice offered by previous research assistants)

Make sure to get the background on the project and the neighborhood. What politics and dynamics are behind the project? What are the neighborhood demographics? The history of the organization? You should read the proposal the neighborhood organization submitted to NPCR.

Make sure you understand why the neighborhood organization needs the research and how they intend to use the results. This will help you shape your project.

There may be quite a few people involved in your project. It is your responsibility to figure out what everyone's role is and what your relationship with them will be. Who are you accountable to? Who can help you with which tasks? Who defines your tasks? What is your primary task? What will the final product be?

Keep the needs of the organization at the forefront. That can help to guide you if you get stuck.

Though your work will be fairly independent, maintain contact with everyone involved throughout the project. Make sure everyone involved has the same goal in mind. Keep checking with all the participants. Show pieces of your work and drafts of your writing along the way.

It may be helpful to set up a regular meeting time with your project supervisor. You are responsible for organizing your own time, and a regular time to check in and talk things over is beneficial in many cases.

You must be self-motivated. Others will help you and give you guidance, but the energy needs to come from you.

If you have a question or need help, ask. There are people available to support you. Use your mentors for additional perspectives and expertise on your research topic. Even if things are going well the research can be enriched by the additional input.

Find out about existing information on your topic so you don't have to repeat someone else's efforts.

Expect to get overwhelmed at times. Expect to have a great experience!

Figure 5: Tips for NPCR Research Assistants

The experience often improved the clarity or changed the direction of a student's career plans.

It [the job] definitely pushed me in one direction over others. Before I wanted to work in urban planning, but now I see I've moved to the community side of it. I really enjoyed seeing the energy and power of community work. [research assistant]

This job combined all three things I want to do: land use, economic development, housing. Basically this is what I want to do for my job. [research assistant]

One problem consistently reported by students in the first year of NPCR was general confusion about the structure of NPCR. The complexity of the program, with the students working for the neighborhood organizations, getting paid by their schools, talking to administrators at CURA, and going to see mentors at yet another organization led to bewilderment about what NPCR is, and where their paychecks were really coming from. Since residents in the neighborhoods were curious about this as well, students sometimes found themselves in awkward positions. This was addressed through the creation of an NPCR information packet given to each student when they first meet with the project director and neighborhood project supervisor to discuss the work plan. This packet includes an overview of NPCR, a description of roles and responsibilities, a tip sheet that lists bits of advice from their peers acquired through interviews and questionnaires (see Figures 4 and 5, pp. 19 and 20), information on NRP, and brochures from resource centers that may be of use to the project. The feedback on these packets has been very positive, with project supervisors asking for one, too.

Make use of the information provided to you as a new RA in the maroon NPCR folder!
[research assistant]

Another frustration that students frequently reported in exit interviews and questionnaires was that their projects did not have clear, focused objectives. When asked what advice they would give to someone who was about to begin an NPCR research assistantship, 73 percent of student respondents said it was important to clarify goals and objectives with the neighborhood organization. This was in spite of the fact that most students were either satisfied (48 percent) or very satisfied (33 percent) with the neighborhood supervision of the project, and the majority of student respondents thought the roles of everyone involved were clear (47 percent) or very clear (23 percent) (see Appendix F, p. 70).

I got interviewed for several of these positions, and in all the interviews they talked about working independently. But both the supervisors and the students need to understand that there are limits to working independently. If you are too independent you don't give [the neighborhood organization] what they want. It can be too loose. The students need direction.
[research assistant]

One thing that was tough [about the job] was that I was really on my own. . . . The whole dynamic was hard because it was like pulling teeth to get any feedback. It was hard to know what [the neighborhood organization] wanted. [research assistant]

Even the students with impressive previous experience often felt that they weren't put to good use and if the

projects had had more direction the research would have been more beneficial to the organizations. In some cases this was in contrast to the complete satisfaction reported by the project supervisor. This may be an indication that students need some kind of simple orientation or discussion to prepare them for how neighborhood organizations operate, and to give them appropriate expectations that in many cases the project will gradually become focused, or that part of the point of the project may be to sharpen the community's concern.

For the student there has to be a good fit, and the neighborhood needs to know what they're doing so they can give instruction and keep the student focused, and give them a manageable project. Organizing is a new thing for most students and they need to be filled in about neighborhoods, especially is the neighborhood group is new and just trying to figure it out. [Coordinating Council member]

This is blending two very distinct worlds and that is a challenge, but there is also potential for it to be useful for both. For students the success will be seeing organizations at work and to be introduced to the nonprofit sector. They can see how much gets done with limited resources and how networks actually work. [Coordinating Council member]

Keep asking yourself and the neighborhood representatives this simple question: "What does the neighborhood want to know?" Then, be flexible. The responses to that question will be more vague and muddled than the job description suggests, and the direction of the project will likely shift and become more focused as you gather information. [research assistant]

Overall, NPCR students have been enthusiastic, empowered, and occasionally inspired by their NPCR research experiences. These positions have provided a means for undergraduate students to apply their course work to the complex problems of neighborhood revitalization, and the students have, for the most part, risen to the challenge and found it to be an exciting experience. Many undergraduates use their NPCR position to satisfy internship or service requirements at their school. Several graduate students have reported that their success in job placement subsequent to graduation was a direct result of their NPCR assistantship.

For the students it is an opportunity to do fieldwork, and just the process of going through hiring and becoming aware of the assumptions and objectives of those who hire them will be educational. It is a practical education as they figure out the job, and that is success in itself. Learning about urban life is a success [for the student]. [Coordinating Council member]

I had the chance to see that people in a neighborhood can actually affect higher levels of government. I also felt like my schooling has a point; there is something I can do with my knowledge. [research assistant]

This is a great thing to do in order to find out what grassroots is all about. [research assistant]

[I learned that] you don't just live on a block. It is a part of a community and that can really mean something. Now when I drive around I notice murals and things and I understand that something really went into that. [research assistant]

NPCR ASSISTANCE FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS

The central commitment of NPCR is to foster applied neighborhood-driven research. To increase the likelihood that such research will successfully come to completion and actually bolster revitalization efforts, several kinds of assistance are provided.⁷ The first type is the advice and expertise offered by community and faculty mentors. The second is technical assistance.

So many people are not prepared to deal with NRP - it is a drain for the neighborhood. It is important to have help from a more objective person who is not a part of the city bureaucracy. . . . Also, the NRP research piece is very important. Too often people start with the solution rather than investigating problems. [Coordinating Council member]

There needs to be a way to figure out how to get help to those neighborhoods who need it the most but are the least able to handle supervising a student. [Coordinating Council member]

MENTORS

NPCR strives to provide each neighborhood research project with two mentors. The expectation is that the student will meet with each mentor at least three times during the project. A faculty mentor offers advice on research design and methodology. Sixty-eight percent of student exit questionnaire respondents rated their faculty mentors as useful or very useful, 14 percent considered them not useful, and 18 percent did not have a faculty mentor (see Appendix F, p. 71).

[My faculty mentor] gave direction on where to look for information, brainstormed about community resources, helped revise the draft survey, edited the final survey, reviewed the results, and helped me think about presentation. [research assistant]

A community mentor directs the student to resources, contributes expertise on the issue being researched, and puts the project into perspective for the student. Eighty percent of students who completed an exit questionnaire rated their community mentors as useful or very useful, 10 percent considered them not useful, and 10 percent did not have community mentors (see Appendix F, p. 71). Community mentors also serve to increase awareness of NPCR in general and the specific research findings in particular, helping to disseminate information to other community groups.

If I didn't have a community mentor it would have been much harder. She was terrific. [research assistant]

[My community mentor] was helpful throughout. He was a resource person I could call to get quick answers to my questions. [research assistant]

⁷Since a fair bit of the support occurs informally in contacts and referrals made during conversations between the variety of people who communicate through NPCR, it is difficult to enumerate it precisely.

The project director reports an overwhelmingly positive response from those whose expertise has been called upon to provide this assistance, and intermittent phone calls as part of the evaluation also confirm that when mentors have been involved in projects they find it to be an interesting experience and many would like to do it again. In several cases one of the mentors proved to be crucial to the shape and success of the research. Several project supervisors reported that they viewed the mentors as an excellent side benefit of receiving an NPCR grant. While it is not possible to predict how the mix of mentors, project supervisor, and student researcher will turn out in a particular project, it is clear that mentors well-used have served to increase the quality and usefulness of neighborhood projects. Mentors are an important part of the mixture in creating support for community-led projects. The intent is to provide resources that increase the likelihood of success, and if a community mentor proves crucial in one project while a faculty mentor gives significant guidance in another, NPCR has fulfilled its overall objective of providing research assistance that moves the neighborhood organization toward its revitalization goals. The hope is that the neighborhood organization will get what it needs out of the mix of available resources even though every ingredient in the mix might not be fully utilized.

A problem regarding mentors is that while students who have made good use of their mentors report that their consultation resulted in a significantly better project, many students have been reluctant to take full advantage of their mentors. This is confirmed by mentors who reported either that they did not hear from the student at all, or that they could have provided the student with more help or information if the student had only asked.

The students could have utilized the experience of this organization and me much more than they did. I was disappointed that they didn't work with me more. It could have been much more substantial. [community mentor]

There is much more that I could have provided. [community mentor]

In exit interviews some students have given the impression that they were only inclined to talk to their mentors if a problem came up, and did not otherwise view them as resources available to enhance the project. Though there are instances of mentors who take the initiative and contact their students, the responsibility for using mentors currently lies exclusively with the student. When project supervisors have viewed mentors as an important resource for the neighborhood and encouraged the student to take advantage of the mentor's expertise it has helped considerably. Perhaps the value of mentors to the project as a whole should be emphasized more strongly than it is currently. It is also possible that the role of the mentor is not clear to some students, and perhaps to some mentors as well.

The role was undefined. I didn't know what was expected and it seemed like [the student] didn't either. There were several different understandings of the project floating around and the role was not clear. It's difficult when there are so many people the student is expected to work with. . . . [The student] had no clear understanding of why he should meet with me. [community mentor]

Another problem NPCR has encountered is that during the summer when much of the research activity takes place, faculty are less available to serve as mentors. Because of the positive impact mentors have had on projects, this underuse of mentors needs to be remedied.

Take advantage of mentors. The opportunities for learning above and beyond position description are endless. . . . [research assistant]

Academic and/or community mentors are only what you make of them. [research assistant]

[The student] took the initiative. It worked mostly because of his initiative. He kept the process going. [community mentor]

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

NPCR provides technical assistance to projects based on the individual needs of each neighborhood research goal. It may simply consist of referring them to a library or organization that can offer information or assistance. Two commonly used sources of assistance are Will Craig, the Assistant Director of CURA who advises on computer and specifically GIS sources, and the Minnesota Center for Survey Research, where consultations about survey design are available. The most visible source of technical assistance is the Community Computer Advisory Committee.

Community Computer Advisory Committee

In 1994 NPCR funded a project initiated by six neighborhood organizations interested in determining the feasibility of a neighborhood computer network to facilitate access to information and communication between neighborhood groups. Seventeen neighborhood organizations were surveyed to determine their interest in participating in a computer network. During the course of this study, Twin Cities Free-Net⁸ (TCFN), a community-based computer network dedicated to public access, was initiated. The study concluded that there was sufficient neighborhood interest and utility and that TCFN provided a suitable platform for neighborhood use. NPCR sponsored a workshop to report on the findings and demonstrate TCFN. The workshop, held at a University of Minnesota computer lab, also demonstrated the impossibility of group training because of the wide range of computer experience and the varied hardware and modem connections used by participants. These activities established that the time was ripe for developing an electronic network for neighborhood organizations.

CURA committed support for a graduate research assistant, Mark Brose, to work with an advisory committee coordinated by the NPCR project director to develop the use of TCFN by neighborhood organizations. This resulted in the formation of the Community Computer Advisory Committee to guide this project. The Community Computer Advisory Committee is comprised of both users and information providers working to address three areas: 1) access; 2) lateral communications; and 3) vertical information.

⁸The Twin Cities Free-Net is a charitable, volunteer-driven organization that promotes the use of a new generation of communications and information tools to create a community communications network. Free-Net offers a wide spectrum of on-line services to the public, including electronic messaging, forums for on-line discussion, and community and government databases.

The purpose of the committee is to increase the capacity of Minneapolis neighborhood organizations to undertake revitalization planning and program development. This is being accomplished by assisting organizations in gaining access to the TCFN, using TCFN to network and exchange information on revitalization planning and program development, and using TCFN to identify and use institutional information resources to develop revitalization plans and programs. The goal of the committee is to help every neighborhood organization in Minneapolis gain the capacity to use TCFN by assuring they have the necessary infrastructure and training, and to provide information that makes TCFN a valuable resource. For more information about the Community Computer Advisory Committee, contact Mark Brose, 625-1551, or brose@freenet.msp.mn.us.

The accomplishments of Mark Brose under the guidance of the committee are the following: 1) 75 training sessions have been conducted for neighborhood organizations; 2) 40 neighborhood organizations have accounts on Free-Net, and 15 of these have published web pages; 3) a mailing list has been created on TCFN to serve as a forum for neighborhood activists (130 people have subscribed to the mailing list); 4) a complete listing of NPCR projects is published on TCFN, as well as many of the final reports; and 5) a survey for determining priorities for areas of publication on TCFN has been completed.

FACULTY RESEARCH PROJECTS

In addition to the neighborhood-led student projects, Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) solicits two faculty-directed research projects each year as a means for both fostering community-based research and providing community groups with information useful to their work. The topics must have broad application across Minneapolis neighborhoods and address important public policy concerns or governmental practices that affect the ability of Minneapolis neighborhoods to successfully undertake revitalization activities. Grants for faculty research include up to two months faculty salary plus graduate research assistance equivalent to half-time for nine months.

Much of the activity in this area has been focused on developing a process for soliciting faculty research that is responsive to problems identified by neighborhood groups and open to including community participants. This has proved to be an elusive goal. The first approach was to solicit ideas for research needs from neighborhood organizations and then ask faculty at the participating schools to respond to these topics. The expectation was that projects would "emerge from a process of discussion and negotiation between neighborhood organizations and faculty" (memo K. Nelson March 1994). Though our first two faculty projects were initiated in this manner, there was limited faculty response and the process proved to be cumbersome and unclear. It worked against some aspects of academic life which are firmly embedded. It did not take into account the following: the establishment of long-standing research interests which are difficult to change quickly; schedules that are filled well in advance, making faculty unable to undertake projects on the neighborhood organization's timetable; and institutional biases that offer few, if any, rewards for community-based research. Taking into consideration the advice from faculty members of the Coordinating Council, the process was revised. The second and current approach is to initiate projects by requesting faculty to propose community-based research projects of interest to them, which are then reviewed by community members who can speak to the issues presented. Though the process is still developing, this approach appears to be an improvement. It is likely that this will continue to develop as more is learned about how to find matches between community research needs and faculty pursuits.

While finding a satisfactory process for soliciting faculty research has been a frustration, the faculty projects which have been undertaken have exceeded the goals set for them. The success of these projects shows that finding a way through the institutional obstacles and differences between faculty and community needs is an important and promising undertaking. NPCR has funded six faculty research projects, which is on target for the completion of our third program year. The completed projects are described below.

Hale School Redesign Project, the first faculty research project to be completed, was a collaboration on the redesign of the Hale Elementary School as identified in the Hale, Page, and Diamond Lake Community Association's (HPDL) NRP action plan.⁹ This project was led by Prof. Garth Rockcastle, Head of the Architecture Department at the University of Minnesota.¹⁰ Prof. Sandra

⁹This project was also funded by the Hale, Page, and Diamond Lake Community Association and the Minneapolis Board of Education.

¹⁰Charles Leer, a development consultant, worked with Prof. Rockcastle.

Tutwiler, from the Education Department at Hamline University, facilitated parent involvement and described and evaluated the process used throughout the project. Student research assistance was provided by two University of Minnesota graduate students in architecture, one in child psychology, and a Hamline undergraduate student in education. The Hale School project was designed to address two important aspects of contemporary conditions in education. First, it assessed the needs of an aging facility at a time when federal, state, and local governments have called attention to the serious need for repair and redesign of public school buildings. Second, it emphasized collaboration at a time when joint effort of families, neighbors, and schools is increasingly viewed as essential to assuring that the needs of our youth and communities are met. School buildings are often central to a neighborhood, and residents from HPDL wanted to make Hale School more accessible as a community facility when not in use for classes. Through the use of a community-based team, this project established rebuilding principles, design alternatives and recommendations, evaluation of and recommendations for the process, a projected budget, and suggestions for implementation. The results and methodology are in "Hale School Renovation & Expansion: Final Report" (March 1995), available in the CURA library.

Impact of Multi-Family Housing on Urban Neighborhoods, was conducted by Prof. Edward Goetz, from the Housing Program at the University of Minnesota, with the assistance of two graduate research assistants from the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Multi-family subsidized housing developed by neighborhood-based community-development corporations (CDCs) has been under attack recently because opponents charge that it depresses nearby property values, causes an increase in crime, and increases the concentration of poverty while destabilizing the neighborhood. This research addresses those concerns by providing factual content for the debate of the effects of multi-family subsidized housing on neighborhood health. The results of this research are in *There Goes the Neighborhood?* by Edward Goetz, Hin Kin Lam, and Anne Heitlinger (January 1996), available from CURA.

Minneapolis Commercial Corridors Redevelopment, conducted by Barbara Lukermann, Senior Fellow at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, provides guidance for the neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis which are working together to revitalize commercial, retail, and industrial corridors that border more than one neighborhood. As planning efforts have moved toward completion, the prospects for implementation have varied. However, the Nicollet Avenue Corridor plan is notable in that it has funds committed from neighborhood plans, city and state sources, and city agencies support its implementation. This project focused its research on the Nicollet Avenue Plan to identify the factors that contributed to its successful implementation and to determine which of these are transferable to future inter-agency and inter-neighborhood planning efforts. The findings are in the "Handbook for Navigating Through the Commercial Corridor Process" by Barbara Lukermann, Mariia Zimmerman, and Deb Martin (June 1996), available from CURA.

Environmental Risks, GIS, and Community Needs, which is being conducted by Prof. Robert McMaster, Department of Geography, University of Minnesota, addresses the continuing challenge of disseminating and analyzing information released through the Federal Emergency Planning and

Community Right to Know Act of 1986 (SARA Title III). Despite intentions to assist citizen action, the Toxic Release Inventory database which resulted from this legislation has proven to be difficult to disseminate in a manner suitable for use by neighborhood and other community groups. The goals of this project are: 1) to make geodemographic data available to community groups; and 2) investigate the usefulness of GIS-based information for community groups. This project is currently underway.

MIS Curriculum Development and Neighborhood Needs, which is being conducted by Prof. Kathy Schwalbe, MIS Program, Augsburg College, aims to fulfill two complimentary needs. The first is the development of community projects to be undertaken in Management Information Systems (MIS) classes in which students apply project management, systems analysis and design skills to practical problems. The second is to provide technical assistance to neighborhood organizations which are just beginning to learn to use electronic media to access and distribute information and develop planning materials. The object of this project is to conduct field work in neighborhood organizations to discover their needs for technical assistance with MIS applications, and then redesign two MIS courses to go part of the way in meeting those needs. This project is currently underway.

Electric Utility Restructuring and Low Income Households, which is being conducted by Prof. Steve Hoffman, Department of Political Science, and Prof. Joseph Kreitzer, Department of Economics, both at the University of St. Thomas, addresses the disproportionately high amount of monthly income low-income households spend on energy in the face of fundamental changes in the electricity sector occurring as a result of the 1978 Public Utilities Regulatory Policy Act and the 1992 Energy Policy Act. Though the intent of these laws was to generate more competition and therefore increase efficiency, it is quite possible that the result will actually be fewer competitors, more pollution, lower rates for some classes of customers and higher rates or no service for other classes of customers. This research is examining three areas of concern to neighborhood organizations in low income areas: 1) the effect marginal increases in energy bills have on households that fall below the poverty level; 2) the ancillary effects of restructuring such as the elimination of weatherization programs; and 3) the degree to which low-income neighborhoods will be able to compete in the new energy market. This project is currently underway.

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REFLECTION AND ASSESSMENT

RESEARCH FOR CHANGE CONFERENCE

As NPCR moved into its third program year, the staff and Coordinating Council members began to prepare for a gathering designed not only to reflect on NPCR as a model and to explain the lessons learned through its endeavors, but also to discuss the dynamics of academic and neighborhood communities working together more generally. Though the conference was initially intended to serve as part of the evaluation of NPCR, a gathering to further the practice of community-based academic work, including a group beyond NPCR participants emerged as the desire of the staff and Coordinating Council. The success of NPCR made it possible to broaden the agenda.

On March 8, 1996, NPCR held a conference entitled "Research for Change." The purpose of the conference was to present NPCR as a model for community-based research which effectively addresses pressing urban problems faced by community groups, and to discuss such undertakings more generally. The lessons learned through experience and evaluation were presented to the group as a whole to provide a concrete example that could serve as a basis for discussion and reflection (see Figure 6, p. 35). It was attended by seventy-one people, not including the three NPCR staff and eight conference organizers. One of the main strengths of the conference was the success of pulling together a mixed group consisting of members of community groups from the Twin Cities (29), faculty and staff from area schools (32), and students (10). Research for Change was set up to be a working conference, with participants talking both with members of their own constituency as well as across groups. The hope was to set in motion ideas on how to institutionalize community-based research, and to set examples and build relationships that would encourage requests for such assistance by community groups.

The morning breakaway sessions addressed the following four questions:

- 1) Why is community-based research important?
- 2) What are the elements of successful community-based research?
- 3) What are the barriers to successful community-based research?
- 4) What are the resources needed for community-based research?

These questions were discussed among members of the same constituency, student, community organization, or academic institution. At lunch the keynote speaker was Prof. Jose Calderon¹¹ from Pitzer College in Claremont, CA, who is well-known for his expertise in community-based education and research. The afternoon breakaway sessions built on the morning discussions by choosing the top three needs which must be met in order to institutionalize community-based research in higher education, followed by a discussion of strategies to find the resources to meet those needs. All the feedback received from conference participants was appreciative and positive. Many participants, from both academia and local communities,

¹¹Jose Calderon is an associate professor of sociology. His scholarly research and community involvements focus on multiethnic coalitions, and he has involved students in a variety of community-based projects.

reported that they felt energized and excited by the discussions and presentations. (For conference materials and notes, see Appendix I, p. 95.)

The results of the conference were encouraging. Many participants were impressed simply by the mixed group of attenders, and the practical, positive tone of the discussions. More concrete outcomes of the conference were:

- 1) a mailing list of faculty, community activists, and students who are committed to community-based education and research
- 2) follow-up meetings held in April to begin ongoing discussions of: the creation of a network for those interested in community-based research so faculty and community members are more likely to be able to find each other outside of the NPCR proposal review model; how community groups can get assistance in developing ideas for research, something which has proven to be crucial to the success of NPCR neighborhood research projects; and what support and orientation students need in order to succeed in community-based research, such as supports developed by NPCR
- 3) funding from the Minneapolis Foundation to create an exchange of university research resources and community research needs, modeled after the network initiated by Occidental College for Los Angeles area communities.

WORKSHOPS

An aspect of NPCR that extends beyond each project is the goal of distributing information among community activists in order to break down the isolation that frequently plagues neighborhood groups, resulting in continuously "reinventing the wheel." This is accomplished not only through placing the project reports in the CURA library and on Free-Net, but also through periodic workshops open to anyone who works in their community. These workshops evolved out of both neighborhood and faculty research projects, and they bring in representatives of other groups who can speak to the issue, such as Citizens for a Better Environment or the Homebased Business Association of Minnesota. The specific goal of NPCR is to conduct four workshops per program year.

Five of these workshops have been concerned with the issue of ensuring neighborhood access to the burgeoning world of electronic networks. Preliminary discussions were held in a workshop in December 1993 which was attended by people from neighborhood organizations, nonprofits, CURA, and the NRP. This was followed by a workshop on February 9, 1994, which centered on demonstrations of computer bulletin boards for neighborhood representatives. During the spring and summer of 1994, a coalition of

neighborhood organizations called the Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition,¹² successfully submitted a proposal to NPCR, and subsequently supervised an NPCR graduate research assistant who created a preliminary inventory of the computer capacity and equipment in a small group of Minneapolis neighborhood organizations. The results of this research were presented at a workshop on September 8, 1994, which was cosponsored by NPCR, the Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition, and the Twin Cities Free-Net. The thirty-five people in attendance received a hands-on introduction to the new Twin Cities Free-Net Neighborhood Center. This was followed by a smaller gathering on September 16 with people from organizations who were in a position to contribute resources to get a neighborhood bulletin board up and running. As a result of these discussions, the Community Computer Advisory Committee was formed (see p. 25 for elaboration). The Community Computer Advisory Committee then held a seminar in August 1995 to work out a plan for the creation of a neighborhood communications network. It was attended by neighborhood leaders, neighborhood staff, and Free-Net representatives.

Other workshops included one on supporting home-based businesses as a part of a neighborhood's economic development strategy, held on June 28th, 1994 in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood. Three more neighborhood research projects on home-based businesses were initiated as a result of attendance at this workshop. There was a workshop on the importance of neighborhood action on environmental issues and the usefulness of developing an environmental profile held on October 6, 1994 in the Marcy-Holmes neighborhood. Two workshops were held in February 1995 to address the mechanics of setting up neighborhood home improvement programs. These were held in conjunction with the release of a manual on revolving loan programs written by an NPCR graduate research assistant.¹³

There have also been workshops based on the completed faculty research projects. The first was held by Prof. Garth Rockcastle in March 1995 to discuss the results of the collaborative work on the redesign of Hale Elementary School. This was attended by school officials, community leaders, and parents. In January 1996, Prof. Ed Goetz presented his findings on the impact of subsidized multi-family housing on urban neighborhoods for discussion with the Minneapolis Consortium of Community Nonprofit Developers and the St. Paul Coalition for Community Development. Prof. Barbara Lukerman held a workshop in May 1996 on neighborhood efforts to develop declining commercial corridors. It was attended by neighborhood leaders and staff of neighborhood organizations and city agencies. (See p. 27 for further descriptions of faculty research projects.)

EVALUATION

Since NPCR is an innovative project, ongoing formative evaluation was built into its design at the onset. This was to ensure that NPCR activities are documented and its practices adapted as the project evolved. Since the high level of neighborhood control that NPCR promotes in its research projects is

¹²The Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition was a joint project of representatives from organizations that are interested in promoting an electronic network for neighborhood use and included people from Lowry Hill East, Marcy-Holmes, Corcoran, Hale-Page-Diamond Lake, Victory, and Northeast Reps, itself a coalition of thirteen neighborhoods.

¹³Pulkrabek, Ryan. 1995. "Neighborhood Home Improvement Loan Fund Handbook." CURA Publication No. NPCR 1013.

unusual, it was especially important to include evaluation as part of the program.

The process evaluation was designed to address the overall question: *How well do the several activities of the NPCR project move participants towards achieving the stated goals?* This was divided into smaller areas of investigation: looking at neighborhood participation and satisfaction, proposal development and project outcome, student participation and satisfaction, mentor participation and satisfaction, and administration and organization. Research and evaluation methods include examination of documents, conversations, interviews, observation, and questionnaires. In addition, the program evaluator had primary responsibility for organizing the Research for Change conference (described above on p. 31).

The process evaluation resulted in adjustments to the program, including simplifying the proposal review schedule, development of the work plan meetings, development of the information packets for students and project supervisors, troubleshooting on individual neighborhood research projects as problems are discovered through mid-point check-in phone calls, and general guidance for the progress of the program. In general, the process evaluation has resulted in increased confidence in NPCR as a model. Detailed information and a solid understanding of NPCR has boosted the commitment to expanding NPCR's offerings to St. Paul neighborhoods, and perhaps eventually to other kinds of community groups. The completion of the process evaluation as compiled in this report will end the formal evaluation of NPCR.

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

An NPCR neighborhood research project is likely to be successful if it has:

- a need/issue/problem identified as necessary to revitalization by the neighborhood organization;
- multiple opportunities to shape and clarify the project to meet the neighborhood's needs;
- the responsibility for selecting the student research assistant placed with the neighborhood organization;
- a plan developed by the project supervisor, the student, and the NPCR project director to clarify the responsibilities and desired outcomes;
- a clear, written description of all participants' respective roles and responsibilities distributed to all concerned at the beginning of the project;
- support for student researchers through the recruitment of both community and faculty mentors;
- a mid-project "check-in" by NPCR staff to find out how the project is progressing according to the work plan, with staff otherwise remaining available for consultation only when asked;
- a write-up or project report completed and made available to inform future projects.

Figure 6: Elements of Successful NPCR Projects

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

Augsburg College is a private school which provides a high quality liberal arts education to over 3,000 students in weekday and weekend bachelor's programs and in three master's programs. The college's curriculum stresses community service, and it has defined itself as a "college of the city" since its beginnings. Augsburg is committed to students with diverse backgrounds, experience, and preparation. It has an academic program based on the premise that students are to be educated as full persons. Augsburg has a commitment to recruit, retain, and graduate individuals with physical disabilities and learning disabilities who demonstrate the willingness and ability to participate in college-level training.

The **College of St. Catherine** is a private liberal arts college that aims to educate a diverse community of learners within a context of Catholic faith and values. By fostering academic and personal excellence, the college prepares its graduates for leadership and service in the broader community. It offers undergraduate liberal arts and professional programs for women, associate degrees and certificates in health care and human services for women and men, and coeducational graduate programs in eight disciplines.

Hamline University's College of Liberal Arts has as its mission the education of service providers for our communities and for society at large. Their nationally acclaimed curriculum, the Hamline Plan, features the practical values of the liberal arts. As part of the Plan, students are asked to explore the practical connections between the liberal arts, work, and citizenship. Through the Leadership, Education and Development (LEAD) component of the Plan, students obtain academic credit through active involvement in community service. Hamline also offers master's programs in liberal arts and public administration.

The **Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA)** is a collaborative effort of seventeen Upper Midwest colleges that cooperate to offer off-campus programs in Scandinavia, Latin America, and Minneapolis-St. Paul. The original HECUA program is the Metro Urban Studies Term (MUST) which, through internship work, field study, and seminars, offers an interdisciplinary off-campus semester program in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Macalester College is an independent, undergraduate liberal arts college that is well-known for its traditions of academic excellence, community involvement, and international understanding. The internship program is a vital part of Macalester's commitment to experiential education. At Macalester theory learned in the classroom is supplemented by education gleaned from experience in a work environment.

Metropolitan State University is an upper-division publicly-supported institution with offices in both St. Paul and Minneapolis. Classes are held throughout the metropolitan area for a student body of over 8,000 individuals, most of whom are working adults. Community-based learning is formally embodied in one of the University's five philosophical tenets.

Minneapolis Community College (MCC) is a two-year, lower division institution which served 6,511 students in credit programs and 4,500 students in non-credit continuing education programs in 1991. The typical MCC student is a first generation, non-traditional college student who attends classes part-time. The

majority of students are closely linked with the local community through employment or family and would be unable to attend college without the access provided by MCC.

The **Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program** was enacted by the state legislature in 1990, providing \$20 million per year for twenty years. The strategy for the NRP involves two key components: neighborhood involvement and interagency cooperation. The NRP process begins with neighborhood planning in which residents identify the most important needs in the neighborhood in the short-, mid-, and long-term. These plans are then negotiated with local government agencies for approval and implementation.

St. Thomas University is a private, coeducational, Catholic, liberal arts university with campuses in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. It seeks to develop morally responsible individuals who combine career competency with cultural awareness and intellectual curiosity. The University's location in a major metropolitan area, coupled with its commitment to develop morally responsible individuals, challenges all members of the institution to participate in community life and to offer innovative programs for persons of all ages within the community.

The **University of Minnesota** was established in 1869 and maintains its main campus in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area. It is the largest campus in the nation, and is one of the few land grant institutions located in a major metropolitan area. Its total enrollment is over 40,000 students with 25,515 of those being undergraduates seeking a degree, and 8,300 graduate students seeking degrees in 168 different majors. Other resources include over 5,000 full-time faculty, 1,000 part-time faculty, and a library system that is the fifteenth largest in the country.

The **Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA)** was established by the University in 1968 to extend and sharpen its focus in research and service in urban areas. In the last biennium, CURA engaged 111 faculty from 56 units across the University and 225 graduate students from 35 units working with 15 state agencies, 30 local agencies, and 51 nonprofit organizations. Some 340 different projects were conducted during these past two years, all aimed at issues important to urban communities throughout Minnesota. In short, CURA has been a major outreach unit for the University to the urban community for more than twenty-five years.

The **Minnesota Extension Service** has operated as a cooperative service to Minnesota counties for many decades. More recently, the Hennepin County office was located in Minneapolis with seven staff and a full complement of newly designed outreach programs to meet the needs and interests of a diverse, urban population.

The **Consortium on Children, Youth and Families** was formed in 1991 to provide improved communication and access by community groups and organizations to those institutes, centers, and programs at the University concerned with issues specifically related to children, youth, and families.

APPENDIX B: NPCR PROJECT DATA

TABLE 1: NPCR NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT SUMMARY

	Year One ^a 10/1/93-9/30/94	Year Two 10/1/94-9/30/95	Year Three 10/1/95-9/30/96	Cumulative 10/1/93-5/30/96
	<u>Freq.</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u> <u>%</u>	<u>Freq.</u> <u>%</u>
Total proposals reviewed	26	27	37	90
Proposals funded	22	23	28	73
Grad	11 (50)	11 (48)	11 (39)	33 (45)
Undergrad	11 (50)	12 (52)	17 (61)	40 (55)
Total hours funded	7,670	7,325	7,980	22,975
Grad	4,170 (54)	3,585 (49)	3,690 (46)	11,445 (50)
Undergrad	3,500 (46)	3,740 (51)	4,290 (54)	11,530 (50)
Average hours funded	349	318	285	315
Grad	379	326	335	347
Undergrad	318	312	253	288
Total hours worked	7,241	6,855	¹	14,096
Grad	4,090 (56)	3,465 (51)	-	7,555 (54)
Undergrad	3,151 (44)	3,390 (49)	-	6,541 (46)
Average hours worked	329	298	²	300
Grad	372	315	-	343
Undergrad	286	282	-	284
Projects completed	22	23	7	52

a. The program year is determined by the Urban Community Service Grant program, U.S. Department of Education.

¹Data not available.

²Data not available.

TABLE 2: TIME FROM APPROVAL TO HIRE³

YEAR ONE

# months	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grad		9	2							
Undergrad		5	2	2	1		1			

graduate student average = 2 months; median = 2 months

undergraduate student average = 3 months; median = 3 months

YEAR TWO

# months	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grad	6	3	2							
Undergrad	4	2	5							1

graduate student average = 2 months; median = 2 months

undergraduate student average = 3 months; median = 3 months

YEAR THREE

# months	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grad	2		2							
Undergrad	5		4							

³This includes writing the job description and posting the position.

TABLE 3: PROJECT DURATION⁴

YEAR ONE

# months	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12
Grad	1	3	3	1	1	1
Undergrad	1	6	0	2	0	2

graduate student average = 5 months; median = 5 months

undergraduate student average = 5 months; median = 4 months

YEAR TWO

# months	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12
Grad	0	5	3	2	0	1
Undergrad	0	6	3	2	1	0

graduate student average = 6 months; median = 5 months

undergraduate student average = 5 months; median = 5 months

YEAR THREE

# months	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8	9-10	11-12
Grad				1		
Undergrad	1		3	2		

⁴Time elapsed from hiring to project completion

TABLE 4: ISSUES ADDRESSED BY NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECTS
10/94-6/96

Issue Addressed	Funded	Denied	Total
Housing	17	2	19
Economic Development	13	3	16
Environment	7	3	10
Crime & Safety	6	1	7
Land Use	5	2	7
Traffic/Transportation	5	0	5
History	4	0	4
Computer Resources	3	0	3
Neighborhood Survey	2	2	4
Organizing	2	1	3
Schools/Education	2	0	2
Social Service	2	1	3
Arts	1	0	1
Public Health	1	0	1
Other	3	2	5
Total	73	17	90

APPENDIX C: NPCR NEIGHBORHOOD DATA

TABLE 5: NUMBER OF PROJECTS PER NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION
6/30/96

Neighborhood Organization	Number of projects funded	NRP Designation ^a
Stevens Square Community Organization	8	redirection
People of Phillips	6	redirection
Citizens for a Loring Park Community	5	revitalization
Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association	4	revitalization
Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc.	4	redirection
Whittier Alliance	3	redirection
Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association	3	revitalization
Linden Hills NRP Steering Committee	3	protection
Kenny Neighborhood Association	3	protection
Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Assoc.	2	protection
Jordan Area Community Council	2	revitalization
Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association	2	revitalization
Hawthorne Area Community Council	2	redirection
Hale, Page, Diamond Lake Community Association	2	protection
Fulton Neighborhood NRP Steering Committee	2	protection
Field-Regina-Northrup NRP	2	revitalization

Neighborhood Organization	Number of projects funded	NRP Designation ^a
Calhoun Area Residents' Action Group	2	revitalization
Audubon Improvement Association	2	protection
Windom Community Council	1	protection
Waite Park NRP Steering Committee	1	protection
Victory Neighborhood Association	1	protection
Sheridan Today and Yesterday	1	redirection
Nicollet Island-East Bank Project Area Committee	1	protection
McKinley Community	1	redirection
Lyndale Neighborhood Association	1	redirection
Longfellow Community Council	1	revitalization
Lind-Bohanon Neighborhood Association	1	revitalization
Harrison Neighborhood Association	1	redirection
East Harriet Farmstead Neighborhood Association	1	protection
Downtown Minneapolis Residents' Association	1	protection
Corcoran Neighborhood Association	1	revitalization
Columbia Park Neighborhood Association	1	protection
Bryant Neighborhood Organization	1	redirection
Bancroft Neighborhood Association	1	revitalization

Neighborhood Organization	Number of projects funded	NRP Designation ^a
Coalitions and related groups ¹	8	NA

a. The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) designates neighborhoods according to the following classifications: *protection* neighborhoods are fundamentally sound; *revitalization* neighborhoods show signs of decline; *redirection* neighborhoods have extensive problems.

¹These include: Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition; Hennepin Avenue Task Force; Minneapolis Training Program for Neighborhood Organizers; Central Avenue Steering Committee; Community Computer Advisory Committee; Neighborhood Revitalization Program; Northeast Reps.

TABLE 6: DISPERSION OF NPCR PROJECTS: NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS²

<u>Type of Neighborhood^b</u>	<u>Number of Neighborhood Organizations Funded</u>	
	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>
Protection	13	(38)
Revitalization	11	(32)
Redirection	10	(30)
Total ³	34	(100)

b. The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) designates neighborhoods according to the following classification: *protection* neighborhoods are fundamentally sound; *revitalization* neighborhoods show signs of decline; *redirection* neighborhoods have extensive problems. There are 38 (47%) protection neighborhoods, 28 (35%) revitalization neighborhoods, and 15 (19%) redirection neighborhoods in Minneapolis.

TABLE 7: DISPERSION OF NPCR PROJECTS: NEIGHBORHOODS⁴

<u>Type of Neighborhood</u>	<u>Number of Neighborhoods Funded</u>	
	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>
Protection	17	(42)
Revitalization	14	(34)
Redirection	10	(24)
Total ⁵	41	(100)

²Three of the neighborhood organizations funded represent more than one neighborhood: Hale, Page, and Diamond Lake Community Association (protection); Field, Regina, Northrup NRP (revitalization); Longfellow Community Council (two revitalization, two protection). This table counts them as one neighborhood organization.

³This does not include the eight projects listed under coalitions and related groups in Table 5.

⁴This counts each neighborhood individually, regardless of whether or not it is part of a multi-neighborhood organization.

⁵This does not include the eight projects listed under coalitions and related groups in Table 5.

TABLE 8: CONCENTRATION OF NPCR PROJECTS BY TYPE OF NEIGHBORHOOD⁶

<u>Type of Neighborhood</u>	<u>Number of Projects</u>	
	<u>Freq.</u>	<u>%</u>
Protection	21	(29)
Revitalization	24	(33)
Redirection	28	(38)
Total ⁷	73	(100)

⁶In the case of projects which are conducted by several neighborhood organizations from adjacent neighborhoods, each neighborhood is counted in order to accurately reflect the geographic area affected by the project. However, multi-neighborhood organizations are counted as one neighborhood. The Longfellow Community Council, which has two protection neighborhoods and two revitalization neighborhoods, is counted as a revitalization neighborhood because the project focused on the revitalization area of the community.

⁷This does not include the eight projects listed under coalitions and related groups in Table 5.

APPENDIX D: NPCR STUDENT DATA

TABLE 9: NPCR STUDENT HIRING SUMMARY
6/30/96

	Year One ^a 10/1/93-9/30/94	Year Two 10/1/94-9/30/95	Year Three ¹ 10/1/95-9/30/96	Cumulative 10/1/93-5/30/96
Positions filled	24	24	22	70 ²
Grad	13	12	8	33
Undergrad	11	12	14	37
New applicants ^b	120	92	67	279
Grad	81	52	35	168
Undergrad	39	40	32	111
Applications ^c	199	156	130	485
Grad	137	84	67	288
Undergrad	62	72	63	197
New students hired ^d	31	21	21	73
Grad	17	10	9	36
Undergrad	14	11	12	37
Hires made ^e	34	26	24	84 ³
Grad	19	14	10	43
Undergrad	15	12	14	41

a. The program year is determined by the Urban Community Service Program, U.S. Department of Education.

b. This is the number of individuals who have applied for research assistantships.

c. This is the number of applications made, counting multiple applications by the same person.

d. This is the number of individuals hired, counting each person only once.

e. This is the number of students hired counting multiple hires of the same student.

¹Data are not available for four positions.

²This includes research assistantships for three faculty-directed research projects, two in Year One and one in Year Two.

³Some neighborhood organizations and faculty split their research assistant positions in order to hire students with complimentary education and experience.

TABLE 10: NPCR STUDENT APPLICANTS AND HIRES BY INSTITUTION
6/30/96

	Year One		Year Two		Year Three ⁴		Cumulative	
	New Applicants	Hires	New Applicants	Hires	New Applicants	Hires	New Applicants	Hires
U of M	83	23	55	17	47	13	185	53
Grad	69	19	46	13	33	10	148	42
Undergrad	14	4	9	4	14	3	37	11
Macalester	11	5	24	5	8	6	43	16
Undergrad	11	5	24	5	8	6	43	16
Hamline	11	3	5	4	6	1	22	8
Grad	7	0	1	1	1	0	9	1
Undergrad	4	3	4	3	5	1	13	7
Metro State	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	1
Grad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undergrad	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	1
Augsburg	3	0	2	0	4	3	9	3
Grad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undergrad	3	0	2	0	4	3	9	3
St. Catherine's	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	1
Grad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Undergrad	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	1
St. Thomas	4	1	4	0	1	1	9	2
Grad	2	0	4	0	1	0	7	0
Undergrad	2	1	0	0	0	1	2	2
MCC	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Undergrad	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0

⁴Data not available for four positions.

TABLE 11: NPCR STUDENT HIRES BY RACE⁵
6/30/96

School	Total # Hired	White Students				Students of Color			
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Cum	Y1	Y2	Y3	Cum
U of MN	53	19	15	12	46	4	2	1	7
Macalester	16	5	5	6	16	0	0	0	0
Hamline	8	1	4	0	5	2	0	1	3
Metro State	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
St. Catherine's	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
St. Thomas	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Augsburg	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0
MCC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (%)	84 (100)	27	24	22	73 (87)	7	2	2	11 (13)

⁵Information on the race of applicants is not reported due to lack of reliable data.

TABLE 12: NPCR STUDENT APPLICANTS BY SEX
6/30/96

School	Total # Applicants	Female				Male			
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Cum	Y1	Y2	Y3	Cum
U of MN	185	27	30	22	79	56	25	25	106
Macalester	43	4	14	3	21	7	10	5	22
Hamline	22	4	3	4	11	7	2	2	11
Metro State	3	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	1
St. Catherine's	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
St. Thomas	9	2	2	1	5	2	2	0	4
Augsburg	9	1	1	4	6	2	1	0	3
MCC	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total (%)	274 ⁶ (100)	41	51	35	127 (45)	75	40	32	147 (55)

⁶Data are missing for five applicants.

TABLE 13: NPCR STUDENT HIRES BY SEX
6/30/96

School	Total # Hired	Female				Male			
		Y1	Y2	Y3	Cum	Y1	Y2	Y3	Cum
U of MN	53	10	8	6	24	13	9	7	29
Macalester	16	3	3	2	8	2	2	4	8
Hamline	8	1	2	0	3	2	2	1	5
Metro State	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
St. Catherine's	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
St. Thomas	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Augsburg	3	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0
MCC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total (%)	84 (100)	16	13	11	40 (48)	18	13	13	44 (52)

TABLE 14: MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY FOR ALL NPCR APPLICANTS AND HIRES
6/30/96

Major	Hires Only ^f	All Applicants ^g
Public Affairs	24	66
Political Science	9	20
Geography	7	15
Urban Studies	6	14
Architecture	5	11
Anthropology	4	7
Economics	4	13
Business	3	22
Environmental Studies	3	16
Sociology	2	8
Social Work	2	10
History	2	4
English	2	2
Landscape Architecture	1	4
Education	1	15
Law	0	4
Other	6	37
Total	84	266 ⁷

f. This is the number of students hired counting multiple hires of the same student.

g. This is the number of individuals who have applied for research assistantships *not* counting multiple applications by the same student.

⁷Data are missing for thirteen applicants.

APPENDIX E: PROJECT SUPERVISOR EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSES:

MAY 1994-JUNE 1996

n = 43; response rate = 88%

Following is a verbatim copy of the questionnaire, to which results and comments have been added.

The population for this survey is all neighborhood project supervisors who were involved in NPCR neighborhood research projects which came to completion before May 30, 1996. A neighborhood project supervisor is the person in the neighborhood organization who is responsible for supervising the student research assistant. The project supervisor may be a staff person for the neighborhood organization, or a neighborhood volunteer.

The questionnaire was expanded in July 1995 because the previous practice of conducting exit interviews was stopped at that time. Two questions were added to replace interview questions that were considered essential to evaluating NPCR. Twenty-five questionnaires had been completed by that point. Consequently, though the overall n = 43, for Q9 and Q11, the n = 18 because these items were added in the expansion.

The status of the NPCR Project Supervisor Exit Questionnaire as of June 15, 1996 is as follows: 43 questionnaires returned out of 49 sent; 6 questionnaires were not returned.
Response rate = completed questionnaires/total sent = 88%.

Percentage distribution is computed over all responses disregarding the blanks.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION (NPCR)

Please circle the number which corresponds to the answer closest to your opinion or your current situation.
All individual responses will be kept confidential.

Q1. How did you find out about NPCR? (Circle one.)

<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	
16	39	1. RECEIVED A NOTICE IN THE MAIL
3	7	2. CALLED BY PROJECT DIRECTOR
3	7	3. FROM ANOTHER NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION
4	9	4. REFERRED BY NRP STAFF PERSON
6	15	5. HAVE HAD AN NPCR RESEARCH ASSISTANT BEFORE
9	22	6. OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) <u>Please see p. 60 for responses.</u>
2		BLANK

Q2. How satisfied were you with the information you received about NPCR? *
(Circle one.)

29	71	1. VERY SATISFIED
12	29	2. SATISFIED
-	.	3. NOT SATISFIED
2		BLANK

Q3. What would have made the information more useful?

Please note that the complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 60.

18	42	COMMENT
25	58	NO COMMENT

Q4. Did you receive help from the Project Director when developing your proposal?

<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>		
39	91	1. YES ----->	Q4A. <i>IF YES</i> , how useful was the help you received?
4	9	2. NO	(Circle one.)
-		BLANK	

<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	
28	74	1. VERY USEFUL
10	26	2. USEFUL
-		3. NOT USEFUL
1		BLANK

Q4B. What *kind* of help did you receive?¹

Freq %

Please note that the categories listed below were created from open-ended responses. The total responses will not equal 100% because some respondents made more than one comment. The complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 61.

14	41	NARROWING TOPIC/FOCUSING THE PROPOSAL
7	20	INFO ON WHAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR NPCR FUNDING
4	12	REVIEW OF DRAFT PROPOSAL
12	35	OTHER

Q4C. What would have made the help more useful?

Please note that the complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 62.

13	33	COMMENT
26	67	NO COMMENT

Q5. Did you participate in selecting your research assistant?

Freq %

41	98	1. YES ----->
1	2	2. NO
1		BLANK

Q5A. *IF YES*, how satisfied were you with the applicants?
(Circle one.)

<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	
23	56	1. VERY SATISFIED
15	37	2. SATISFIED
3	7	3. NOT SATISFIED
-		BLANK

Q5B. Comments?²

Please note that the complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 63.

13	56	COMMENT
10	44	NO COMMENT

¹For this item 34 (87%) respondents made comments and 5 (13%) made no comment.

²This item was removed from the questionnaire when it was revised in July 1995. For this item n = 25.

Q6. How satisfied are you with *the fit* between the student and your organization?
(Circle one.)

<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	
30	71	1. VERY SATISFIED
11	26	2. SATISFIED
1	2	3. NOT SATISFIED
1		BLANK

Q7. How satisfied are you with *the performance* of the student on this project?
(Circle one.)

26	63	1. VERY SATISFIED
11	27	2. SATISFIED
4	10	3. NOT SATISFIED
2		BLANK

Q8. How useful is the information or product that resulted from this project?
(Circle one.)

24	58	1. VERY USEFUL
16	39	2. USEFUL
1	2	3. NOT USEFUL
2		BLANK

Q9. How will the results of this project be used by the neighborhood organization?³

Please note that the categories listed below were created from open-ended responses. The complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 64.

8	47	AS A GUIDE FOR PLANNING/SETTING UP A PROGRAM
2	12	USED DIRECTLY IN NRP PLAN
2	12	FORMED BASELINE OF INFO/DATABASE
1	6	BACKGROUND FOR CONSULTANT
1	6	NOT USEFUL
3	18	OTHER

³This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-five questionnaires had already been completed. For this item n = 18; 17 (94%) of respondents made comments, and 1 (6%) made no comment.

Q10. How strongly would you recommend an NPCR research assistant to another neighborhood organization? (Circle one.)

<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	
35	83	1. WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND
7	17	2. WOULD RECOMMEND
-		3. WOULD NOT RECOMMEND
1		BLANK

Q11. What advice would you give to another project supervisor considering an NPCR research project?⁴

Please note that the categories listed below were created from open-ended responses. The total responses will not equal 100% because some respondents made more than one comment. The complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 65.

6	40	SET CLEAR AND REALISTIC GOALS
3	20	MAKE TIME TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE STUDENT
2	13	ESTABLISH REGULAR CONTACT WITH THE STUDENT
6	40	OTHER

Q12. What other comments would you like to make about NPCR?⁵

Please note that the categories listed below were created from open-ended responses. The total responses will not equal 100% because some respondents made more than one comment. The complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 66.

18	60	NPCR IS A GREAT RESOURCE FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS
2	7	GET THE WORD OUT MORE
2	7	STUDENT DIDN'T WORK OUT
2	7	NEED MORE INFO/SUPPORT
10	33	OTHER

⁴This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-five questionnaires had already been completed. For this item n = 18; 15 (83%) of respondents made comments, and 3 (17%) made no comment.

⁵For this item 30 (70%) of respondents made comments, and 13 (30%) made no comment.

SPECIFY OTHER RESPONSES

Q1. *How did you find out about NPCR?*

- Saw short notice in NRP newsletter, NRP/CARE Link.
- Another person received notice and passed it on.
- Member agency/participant.
- Attended panel discussion summer 1994.
- From previous experience with NPCR and discussions with the project director.
- Supported original proposal to fund NPCR with letter to U.S. Dept. of Ed.
- On steering committee.
- Neighborhood staff person - I am not sure how she learned of it.
- Neighborhood association.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES SORTED BY PROGRAM YEAR⁶

Q3. *What would have made the information more useful?*

Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

- Examples of research topics were general, but the information needed on the proposal was quite specific and local.
- A descriptive brochure with examples of students' work with other projects.
- More info on the types of projects that are appropriate.
- More on what else (besides research assistants for NRP projects) NPCR does, or how it might otherwise be a resource for neighborhood organizations like ours.
- Really should be disseminated to more neighborhood groups.
- Some criteria for choosing between undergrad and graduate projects (i.e. does my project warrant a grad student?).
- Because it was the first year there were naturally some bugs to work out. On the whole, it worked pretty well.

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

- I personally received information by word of mouth. For more information I called and found all my questions answered.
- More details as to how it's structured, what my responsibilities and rights were, examples of other projects, so that I could coach the student on expectations.
- More information about what NPCR is - where the money comes from - how it works.
- Notices received via mail and calls from director are very timely.

⁶The program year is determined by the Urban Community Service Grant program, U.S. Department of Education.

- Information regarding writing the proposal.
- I gained more information as time went by - but in the early stages (first month or two) I knew little about NPCR. Clearer information earlier would have been helpful.
- General range of hours for an internship.
- I had all the info I needed.

Year Three: 10/1/95-9/30/96

- Information was useful; unfortunately it was not as timely as I would have liked. Our student has some trouble finishing the project due to his academic reviewer delaying the project.
- List of projects that have some history of their outcome.
- More descriptions of previous projects. I think I saw some in the annual report, but it would have been nice to see some initially too.

Q4B. *What kind of help did you receive?*

Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

- Talked about project in general, discussing what would be appropriate.
- Explained which of several projects sounded most promising.
- Conceptualizing, designing the job, categorizing our needs.
- Actually looked over rough draft to give suggestions - called to ask about unclear items or to get better info.
- Tailoring proposal to better meet NRP goals.
- He helped with what aspects of the proposal to emphasize.
- I believe he was an advocate for our project.
- Ideas on possible areas the intern could address.
- Minor suggestions on design of project and supervision of intern.
- Concept approval, review of draft proposal.
- Advice.
- Direct advice on how to pick an appropriate candidate.
- Technical assistance on proposal development.
- Copies of past surveys.
- No help on the proposal itself. We were given the parameters of hours available and designed program to match availability of resource.

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

- Reviews, suggestions, narrowing the topic.
- Focusing the proposal.
- Suggestions as to what to include.
- Decisions on what direction to go were reached after talking with the director.

- Guidance on research techniques and anticipated results.
- Personal meeting, numerous assistance on phone.
- Help with structuring a useful and 'doable' project, and help getting prospective interns to send us their resumes.
- Clarifying goals and job descriptions and refining our proposal, as well as letting us know what was expected by NPCR.
- Technical assistance in proposal refinement.
- Particularly helpful in building collaboration with other neighborhood organizations. Also helped with content.
- Ideas for research projects, ways to structure project.
- He sat down and listened and helped me get clear what I needed.
- Advice on how to draft request.
- Advice on what could be supported by NPCR.
- Advice on structuring the project.
- Meeting, phone calls, fax.

Year Three: 10/1/95-9/30/96

- The project director helped me formulate aspects of the proposal related to community involvement and participation.
- How to use the assistant, his limitations, review of our objectives.
- Defining project goals.
- The project director helped me to understand the parameters and history of the project. He helped me focus the scope to be reasonable. He reviewed drafts and gave me feedback. The project director was very helpful in identifying community and university contacts who could be helpful to our project.
- Telephone advice.
- Help with scope of services.

Q4C. *What would have made the help more useful?*

Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

- It was helpful as it was.
- Nothing - it was great.
- By providing several interns who could then provide a comprehensive report.
- He offered all the help I needed.
- Examples.
- It was OK the way it was.
- Contact with past interns.

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

- A clear vision of grant objective. Our subject was very broad so it was difficult to identify.
- Can't think of anything.
- I can't think of any situation where I asked for info and did not get it.

Year Three: 10/1/95-9/30/96

- N/A - didn't need any other help and the help I got was very useful.
- More available hours.
- Adjusting goals to fit the applicant pool skills, or help in determining whether an undergrad or graduate student is needed.

Q5B. *Comments? (On student applicants)*⁷

Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

- Highly qualified people applied.
- We had several applicants that were not ideal but at least 2 that were qualified fully.
- We actually had two candidates that were tough to choose between.
- Only had a handful of applicants. Some were good quality - some not so good. Resumes really need to improve.
- Very well prepared and motivated - willing to translate goals into useable products.
- Very self-directed. Good at research and follow through.
- Applicants for winter semester were far inferior to applicants for summer.

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

- Would have preferred more applicants. There seemed to be confusion with the posting at the U of M.
- I feel the process was rushed.
- Please remove postings after selection is completed to eliminate more applications after the fact.
- Expected more candidates with an urban planning background.
- We had a good pool to choose from.

⁷This item was removed from the questionnaire when it was revised in July 1995. For this item n=25.

Q9. *How will the results of this project be used by the neighborhood organization?*⁸

Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

-It will be used to help us set up programs, or access programs, to address rental property in our neighborhood.

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

- As a guideline for traffic calming, discussion and data.
- To develop further the homebased business network group to furnish help, support, education, resources, ideas and experiences to other businesses. To be integrated into a community-based resource directory.
- The results will be used as a plan for a comprehensive redevelopment program.
- Draft is already being used by neighborhood organizations.
- Doing our history.
- We will use the project report recommendations as we formulate our NRP first step plan and action plan.
- For economic development. To help get the neighbors and businesses on track with development possibilities.
- It is forming the basis for a significant project: the development of a database for NRP.
- We currently have a \$25,000 request in to the McKnight Foundation to allow us to hire an organizer intern to implement project recommendations.
- Baseline info as the neighborhood continues its efforts to save Grass Lake.

Year Three: 10/1/95-9/30/96

- The report is being used to guide neighborhood alley improvements, commercial (exterior) improvements and to a lesser extent crime and safety issues. The Garden Committee is working on public plantings to prevent graffiti and "claim" public spaces.
- It showed us our limitations in growth expectations. It will be given to the architect.
- Design of promotional information. Design by targeting applications.
- This research was instrumental in the proposal submitted to the NRP Steering Committee. The research helped focus our thinking on the most leveragable activity. The format was easy to use - individuals could pull out different levels of detail.
- Not. Due to health problems the research assistant has not produced any results, although some work was done.
- Report will be/has been used to determine potential costs, use, design of bike lanes in the neighborhood.

⁸This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-five questionnaires had already been completed. For this item n=18.

Q11. *What advice would you give to another project supervisor considering an NPCR research project?*⁹

Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

-Be clear about what you're trying to accomplish. Make sure you have adequate resources to train and supervise the intern.

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

-To write a grant for the supervisor to get paid as well. I put in an equal amount of time as the research assistant.

-Look at other surveys from communities and talk to other project supervisors. Enlist help from others in the neighborhood. Have specific goals in mind. Work closely with the intern, being available for questions, comments, and brainstorming.

-Make sure your intern understands the limits of their authority to make decisions that might affect the neighborhood, and neighborhood organization.

-Project should be concrete, can be completed. Also, make sure supervision is strong and clear.

-Work closer.

-Make a lot of time to supervise students; patience; get support on being a supervisor if you've never been one. We had a week-by-week schedule, which helped a lot.

-Be clear on what you want, and realistic about what you can accomplish.

-Insist on written reports at regular intervals. Forces the intern to focus his/her thoughts and makes it easier to gauge project development.

-Select an applicant with demonstrated ability to focus on a time-limited project, and limit the subject matter realistically. In all fairness, I think we ourselves were a little hasty and didn't give as clear guidance as might have been helpful.

Year Three: 10/1/95-9/30/96

-Regular meetings with the student are essential. In retrospect, it would have been better to set defined goals for each week to keep the project moving ahead.

-Make sure that the student has enough time to do a thorough job.

-Narrow the scope.

-Critical to help assistant identify and build relationships in the community.

-Either adjust project goals to fit shallow applicant pool depth - or make sure job announcement is well-distributed, either by NPCR or by yourself.

-Know what direction you want to give or are expected to give; let intern know the same.

⁹This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-five questionnaires had already been completed. For this item n=18.

Q12. *What other comments would you like to make about NPCR?*Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

- It took more time to go through the hiring procedure than anticipated.
- It was a great help to have someone concentrating on this project.
- Hard to tell how this information will be used since we are just beginning to use it.
- Takes time to hire students and work with them. Student was very reliable and worked well on her own.
- Wish it had been around earlier!
- NRP is not a very well understood or defined city program. NPCR project helped with translation so that NRP goals are better understood by public.
- If you can insist that NRP use NPCR assistance during the planning phase, it would improve implementation.
- Wish it had been up and running earlier.
- Often administrative help is needed in addition to research help: setting up meetings, phoning, xeroxing, taking minutes, tracking. That is the reality, so it would be helpful to admit this "up front" and provide for it.
- It's important not only to make the information gathered available but to let other neighborhoods know that the information exists.
- THANKS! Keep up the good work! Neighborhood organizations desperately need technical assistance and research help that does not come from the City. This was such a great help.
- This experience is as helpful for the students as it is for the neighborhoods. Students learn to report to volunteers. White students learn to work with people of color in positions of authority.
- Periodically mail out a brochure to nonprofits and neighborhood organizations detailing ideas/issues that an intern could help with.
- The program is an excellent resource.
- It is not NPCR's fault that the student didn't work out. It would have been hard to predict.
- Our difficulties with this project had to do with personal problems/obstacles encountered by our intern. Some of the info he did provide was helpful, but he failed to finish the project.
- Since this project was focused on neighborhood residents participating in the research, I believe it would have been more successful if a graduate level student had been involved.

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

- The project was bigger than could be covered in the hours funded.
- Would have liked a clearer understanding of the roles played by the project director, supervisor, and two mentors, at the beginning stages of writing the proposal.
- Suggest a meeting of all project supervisors to compare notes and help "first-timers" or people not used to supervising.
- NPCR can be an excellent resource for neighborhoods.
- My experience has been very positive! Thank you!
- Our intern did great - and by working with her I learned a lot myself.

-The only comment is that I feel it would be beneficial to free up interns to be less research oriented and more organizing oriented. It is one thing to study policy development, and another to turn policy into concrete neighborhood activity. Policy has to be converted into action and students would benefit from real experience.

-I wish to thank NPCR for the funding and support for these programs.

-NPCR is a great opportunity for students to learn on the streets. Several people have gotten into organizing because of the neighborhood groups.

-We had a good research project. Our research intern has some serious health problems over the course of the project, however, so it wasn't researched as thoroughly as it could have been and that was a bit disappointing.

-I'd use another intern again - in fact, I better look at the timelines!

-I think NPCR has been a great resource for neighborhood applied research projects, and, hopefully, a good learning/work experience for the interns.

-Great resource!

Year Three: 10/1/95-9/30/96

-Good resource for neighborhoods. A lot of the focus seems to be on economic and commercial development. I suggest the program emphasize other areas such as crime and safety, community building, history, etc.

-Really appreciate the help!

-Our student was talented, hard-working, versatile in dealing with a variety of people.

-I felt the structure was there to develop and support a good project. The only piece missing was good advertising of the job opening, and I think that may have been critically lacking for us. Also, wait and get a grad student if possible or possibly necessary.

APPENDIX F: STUDENT EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSES:

MAY 1994-JUNE 1996

n = 46; response rate = 87%

Following is a verbatim copy of the questionnaire, to which results and comments have been added.

The population for this survey is all students who have held NPCR research assistantships for neighborhood projects which came to completion before May 30, 1996.

The questionnaire was expanded in July 1995 because the previous practice of conducting exit interviews was stopped at that time. Two questions were added to replace interview questions that were considered essential to evaluating NPCR. Twenty-nine questionnaires had been completed by that point. Consequently, though the overall n = 46, for Q4, Q5, Q9, and Q14, the n = 17 because these items were added in the expansion.

The status of the NPCR Student Exit Questionnaire as of June 15, 1996 is as follows: 46 questionnaires were returned out of 56 sent; 7 questionnaires were not returned; 3 were eliminated due to no known address. Response rate = completed questionnaires/total sent-eliminated = 87%.

The percentage distribution is computed over all responses, disregarding blanks.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION (NPCR)

Please circle the number which corresponds to the answer closest to your opinion or your current situation. All individual responses will be kept confidential.

		Q1. How did you find out about NPCR? (Circle one.)
<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	
24	52	1. SAW A JOB POSTING
10	22	2. FROM FACULTY OR A STAFF PERSON
3	7	3. FROM ANOTHER STUDENT
6	13	4. HAVE HAD AN NPCR ASSISTANTSHIP BEFORE
3	6	5. OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY) <u>Please see p. 74 for responses.</u>
-		BLANK

		Q2. How satisfied were you with the information you received about the job prior to being hired? (Circle one.)
15	33	1. VERY SATISFIED
28	61	2. SATISFIED
3	6	3. NOT SATISFIED
-		BLANK

		Q3. How satisfied were you with the supervision provided by the neighborhood organization? (Circle one.)
15	33	1. VERY SATISFIED
22	48	2. SATISFIED
9	19	3. NOT SATISFIED
-		BLANK

		Q4. How clear were the roles of everyone involved in the project? (Circle one.) ¹
4	23	1. VERY CLEAR
8	47	2. CLEAR
5	29	3. NOT CLEAR
-		BLANK

¹This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-nine questionnaires had already been completed. For this item n = 17.

PROGRAM EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

Q5. How clearly defined was the neighborhood organization's objective for the project?²
(Circle one.)

<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	
2	12	1. VERY CLEAR
8	47	2. CLEAR
7	41	3. NOT CLEAR
-		BLANK

Q6. How useful was the guidance you received from your faculty mentor? (Circle one.)

9	20	1. VERY USEFUL
21	48	2. USEFUL
6	14	3. NOT USEFUL
8	18	4. I DID NOT HAVE A FACULTY MENTOR.
2		BLANK

Q7. How useful was the guidance you received from your community mentor?
(Circle one.)

17	40	1. VERY USEFUL
17	40	2. USEFUL
4	10	3. NOT USEFUL
4	10	4. I DID NOT HAVE A COMMUNITY MENTOR.
4		BLANK

Q8. Was the estimated time sufficient to complete the project? (Circle one.)

31	69	1. YES
14	31	2. NO
1		BLANK

²This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-nine questionnaires had already been completed.
For this item n = 17.

Q9. Were your abilities recognized and respected?³

<u>Freq</u>	<u>%</u>	
17	100	1. YES
-		2. NO
-		BLANK

Q10. How relevant was this project to your studies? (Circle one.)

23	50	1. VERY RELEVANT
18	39	2. RELEVANT
5	11	3. NOT RELEVANT
-		BLANK

Q11. Did you receive academic credit for this project?

9	20	1. YES ----> <i>IF YES</i> , please describe. <u>Please see p. 74 for responses.</u>
37	80	2. NO
-		BLANK

Q12. Are you a graduate or an undergraduate student?

25	54	1. GRADUATE STUDENT
21	46	2. UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT
-		BLANK

Q13. How strongly would you recommend an NPCR research assistantship to a friend?

36	78	1. WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND
10	22	2. WOULD RECOMMEND
-		3. WOULD NOT RECOMMEND
-		BLANK

³This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-nine questionnaires had already been completed. For this item n = 17.

Q14. What advice would you give to a student who was about to begin an NPCR research assistantship?⁴

Freq %

Please note that the categories listed below were created from open-ended responses. The total responses will not equal 100% because some respondents made more than one comment. The complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 74.

11	73	CLARIFY GOALS/OBJECTIVES WITH NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION
3	20	TAKE TIME TO LEARN ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD
2	13	USE YOUR MENTORS
4	27	OTHER

Q15. What other comments would you like to make about NPCR?⁵

Please note that the categories listed below were created from open-ended responses. The total responses will not equal 100% because some respondents made more than one comment. The complete responses for this item are presented verbatim on p. 75.

20	65	IT WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE.
6	19	NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS NEED TO BE CLEARER.
4	13	HAD SOME PROBLEM WITH MENTORS
3	10	NEED MORE INFO ABOUT NPCR AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT
5	16	OTHER

⁴This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-nine questionnaires had already been completed. For this item n = 17; 15 (88%) respondents made comments, and 2 (12%) made no comment.

⁵For this item 31 (67%) respondents made comments, and 15 (33%) respondents made no comment.

SPECIFY OTHER RESPONSES

Q1. *How did you find out about NPCR?*

- From someone at Hmong American Partnership.
- After hired for the job I learned of the connection between the job and NPCR, I did not originally know of NPCR.
- Agency with whom I worked.

Q11. *Did you receive academic credit for this project?*

IF YES, please describe _____

- Will receive pass/no pass grade at the end of the semester.
- Senior project.
- I received 2 credits with the project listed as an internship.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES SORTED BY PROGRAM YEAR⁶

Q14. *What advice would you give to a student who was about to begin an NPCR research assistantship?*⁷

Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

- Take advantage of mentors, etc. The opportunities for learning above and beyond position description are endless
- Clarify objectives and demand feedback - sometimes groups aren't strict enough, I don't think. And keep a schedule. I didn't and I've really suffered for it!

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

- Have a good understanding of goals and a guideline for what one would like to accomplish.
- Make sure you have clear goals set with the neighborhood.
- Academic/community mentors are only what you make of them.
- Must be self-motivated and enjoy doing independent research.
- 1) Make a clear outline of the work to be done and see to it that everyone involved is aware of the final goal and the methods of getting there. 2) Talk to your supervisor(s) or the person(s) who know the history of the project: know why you are needed. 3) Community needs are so diverse, it's easy to get lost in all the action. Sometimes it is regrettable, but many things will have to be

⁶The program year is determined by the Urban Community Service Grant program, U.S. Department of Education.

⁷This question was added to the questionnaire in July 1995, after twenty-nine questionnaires had already been completed. For this item n=17.

ignored in the final product.

- Spend time beforehand learning as much as you can about NPCR and neighborhood organizations to ensure that you aren't lost once it begins.
- When working with neighborhood/community members, it is very important to remember that they are not operating on a professional level and that what may be appropriate expectations on a professional/business setting are not in this setting.
- Clearly define the project goal and set limits on the scope of the research design.
- This is a great thing to do in order to get a clear picture of what grassroots is all about. Make sure all goals and procedures are clearly defined by your supervisor.
- Verify and/or clarify project objectives with all parties involved in the project before any work is started.
- Keep asking yourself and the neighborhood representatives this simple question: "What does the neighborhood want to know?" Then, be flexible. The responses to that question will be more vague and muddled than the job posting suggests, and the direction of the project will likely shift and become more focused as you gather information.
- Keep submitting written materials regularly.
- Work out of the neighborhood office if you can.

Year Three: 10/1/95-9/30/96

- Find out what the neighborhood's goals with the project are and how it came about (i.e. who's idea was it?).
- Try and develop a good sense of the neighborhood you're working with. Take time to explore it at different points in the day - even before you interview for the job.
- Expect to work independently. Clearly establish what is expected of you by the neighborhood organization.
- Make use of the information provided to you as a new RA in the maroon NPCR folder.
- It is useful to explore what other research has been done on your topic by viewing Twin Cities Freenet and the CURA library.
- Make sure you have a clear understanding of the neighborhood's expectation for you.

Q15. *What other comments would you like to make about NPCR?*

Year One: 10/1/93-9/30/94

- My job involved much more than just the research component advertised. I was really an administrator for the group much of the time. This was okay for me but I suppose it may have been difficult for some. My community mentor was extremely helpful - had he not been involved in the project I would have had much trouble figuring out what to do because I was without official mentors. My supervisor was also most helpful and we worked cooperatively to determine my duties and strategies to fulfill them.
- Maybe a 1-page sheet of information/agreement for mentors about what the expectations are on

both sides.

-I absolutely loved it. I thought it was exactly what most students need to help them discover the practical relevance of their academics (sad to say, this does not always become clear during a 3:30 lecture class).

-Faculty mentor idea is crucial to success of the internship.

-NPCR needs to monitor community mentors better.

-More knowledge about the internship and NPCR prior to the beginning would be very helpful.

-I was very pleased with the type of project that they had chosen to support. I applaud NPCR for that. I would, however, have liked a little more information about NPCR, the organization itself. I felt a little out of touch with the funder in terms of who and where they were coming from. Other than this I wholly support the program and would like to see more programs by NPCR.

-I personally thought that my internship as one of the best learning experiences I have had. I think the strengths were a clear goal for the intern to reach with the needed guidance, and in my case, the opportunity to work with very gifted people.

-It would be nice to receive more guidance on finding mentors.

-Neighborhood organizations need to be as specific as possible about what RAs are there for then stick to it.

-Overall, I enjoyed the internship. I think the idea of a program that connects student interns to neighborhood organizations is wonderful. The few problems I had were with the neighborhood organization rather than the program itself. It is good to have faculty and community mentors.

-I think NPCR offers terrific opportunities for both the student and the neighborhood. From the student's perspective, I had an opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge I acquired at HHH in a "real life" experience. At the same time, the neighborhood received staffing for much needed research and organizational activities.

-Project focus of internship took time to get. Perhaps the goals and needs of the neighborhood organization could be made more specific from the start, and translated into academic language (competence statements) so the student (me) would have a clearer understanding of how they related to each other.

-The project director was very helpful, supportive, and professional. I appreciated the amount of responsibility he let me have while still being intensely involved in the project.

-I believe this is a very valuable program, and that there should be more programs which connect students with some need of practical experience to community groups in need of low-cost professional expertise.

-The experience gained from working with the neighborhood group enabled me to see the importance of public service in the community, and its realization in the housing sector.

-Confusions, for me, was raised with insufficient time and money to complete the project, which, last I knew, was still unfinished.

-I appreciate your time and effort and the ability to see this housing condition firsthand. I hope someday to return to the project.

-I would like the NPCR to keep the research assistantship program running because I think it is very helpful to students.

-The faculty mentor was not adequately informed which compromised the effectiveness of the role.

-The neighborhood association was uninformed concerning the nature of the project (except the grant

writer) and therefore created entry problems.

Year Two: 10/1/94-9/30/95

-You might want to check on the stability of the neighborhood group. It makes it easier if the group is organized and productive. I thought the job experience was excellent.

-The program definitely has been a great experience for me, especially in terms of gaining community organization experience and learning the practicalities of working in community development and planning-related work.

-This is a good program to give all parties involved a benefit. It is a good link between the academic community and the real world. It is nice to see an organization at the grassroots level.

-Despite the fact that I did not find the project relevant to my academic work, it was a unique experience that I value highly.

-I am very glad this program exists. The "ivory tower" model of academia has let society as a whole down. On a scale of 1 to 10, I would rate this program a 10 for importance, value to the student, and (hopefully) value for the community. Thanks!

-The project I worked on was a collaboration between three neighborhoods. This meant that, at times, three people were telling me three different things in terms of the direction they wanted the project to go. This was both difficult and frustrating at times. Otherwise, I thought the program was excellent.

-I would have liked a community mentor who WANTED to talk to me. But there is not much you can do about that except recommend one who wants to get involved.

-I believe this is a great program because students have so much to offer communities and they can learn a lot from them as well. The results from your study are really used. This is so much more satisfying than doing a fake theoretical project.

-I think this is a really wonderful program. I had the chance to see that people in a neighborhood can actually affect higher levels of government. I also felt like my schooling has a point; there is something I can do with my knowledge. Being from rural Minnesota, this project made me feel much closer to the Twin Cities, also.

-I think this is one of the most beneficial programs I've ever encountered. Thanks.

-I am glad that NPCR gives students the opportunity to experience firsthand how one can be involved in neighborhood groups and how directly this can have an impact on society.

-I loved working with my mentor and NRP staff. I had a difficult time with a couple of community members.

-I believe a stipend or block amount would be easier. I worked more than the total hours I billed and would have worked more, and would have managed my work and effort better with this form of compensation.

-The opportunity to do applied research was fantastic. Much of my work was face-to-face interviewing, which certainly strengthened skills I need for my own dissertation work. I had a very positive experience with the neighborhood.

Year Three: 10/1/95-9/30/96

-The organization that I worked for did not have a strong consensus for my work, which caused confusion and frustration. The CURA staff are excellent: well-organized, professional, and supportive.

-A very good resource for graduate students, both for work experience and tuition relief. Thank you.

-During the project I was unsure how to balance the specific needs of the neighborhood with my own concern that the project was intended to be used as a resource for other community organizations.

APPENDIX G: DESCRIPTIONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD RESEARCH PROJECTS

This appendix presents a brief description of each neighborhood research project, including the following: title; neighborhood organization; whether the research assistant was an undergraduate or a graduate student; the number of hours funded; when the information is available, the number of hours that were actually submitted for pay; and the dates of the project. In addition, when applicable the title of the final report is listed along with the CURA reference number. All NPCR reports are available in the CURA library.

Economic Development

Commercial reuse study - Bryant Neighborhood Organization (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 153 hours worked): The research assistant examined redevelopment possibilities for commercial property located in a neighborhood commercial district, including the level of service of the existing convenience store to the neighborhood, identification of alternative uses, and relevant demographics to use for planning. May-September 1994.

Documentation of business contributions to the Longfellow Community - Longfellow Community Council and Greater Lake Street Area Council (undergraduate research assistant; 400 hours funded, 378 hours worked): The student assessed the jobs provided by Lake Street businesses to the community, and determined their property tax contribution as part of the neighborhood tax base. June-September 1994.

Home-based business survey - Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 280 hours worked): The research assistant identified and surveyed neighborhood residents who operate a business from their home, then developed recommendations for supporting these businesses as part of the neighborhood economy. The recommendations were incorporated into the NRP Action Plan. February-May 1994. "Providing Support for an Innovative Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy: Report on a Survey of the Needs of Homebased Business in the Marcy-Homes Neighborhood," by Sacha Peterson (NPCR 1001).

Economic development study of Southeast Industrial Area - Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association (three graduate research assistants; 960 total hours funded, 960 hours worked): The three research assistants created an overview of existing economic conditions. This included conducting a survey of business concerns and plans, making an inventory of planned public investments as well as pollution sites, and investigating how projected business activity can be linked to serve resident employment needs. In addition, the research assistants fostered communication between relevant groups so discussions could begin to create a master plan for the area. April 1994-March 1995. "Southeast Industrial Area Economic Development Study: Phase I and Phase II," by Michael Kane, Elizabeth Malaby, and Mariah Goode (NPCR 1011).

Assessment of commercial and housing markets for Hennepin Avenue - Hennepin Avenue Task Force (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 226 hours worked): The student reviewed existing plans and

previous studies, and conducted key interviews to help the task force develop a more cohesive and compatible commercial corridor. She also compiled property data that will be used by the design consultant hired by the task force. June-September 1994. "Hennepin Avenue Task Force Background Report for the Martin and Pitz Consultant Team," by Deborah Martin (NPCR 1003).

Lake Street business profile - Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (graduate research assistant; 360 hours funded, 346 hours worked): The research assistant conducted a survey of businesses along Lake Street and provided an inventory of current properties. She also researched the potential for new development, particularly high technology industry. June-September 1994. "Lake Street Business Profile for the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association and the Lake Street Task Force," by Terri Peterson (NPCR 1004).

Home-based business survey and development of neighborhood business directory - Field-Regina-Northrop Neighborhood Revitalization Project (graduate research assistant; 360 hours funded, 360 hours worked): The research assistant identified and surveyed home-based businesses to provide the neighborhood with information for developing strategies to support and enhance local enterprises. Information on neighborhood businesses was also collected for inclusion in a neighborhood business directory. June-September 1994. "Field/Regina/Northrop Neighborhood: Homebased Business and Commercial Business Surveys," by Sacha Peterson (NPCR 1002).

Home-based business survey - Whittier Alliance (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The Whittier neighborhood has a large number of home-based businesses, but they work without knowledge of each other, and without neighborhood support. The research assistant located the home-based businesses, conducted interviews, and facilitated the first home-based business network meeting for the neighborhood. December 1994-September 1995. "Whittier Alliance Home-based Business Results," by John Brothers (NPCR 1029).

Urban village lower-level commercial development project - Stevens Square Community Organization (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 260 hours worked): The Stevens Square-Loring Heights neighborhood is one of the most densely populated areas in Minneapolis, and many of its residents do not own cars. The needs of neighborhood residents can be served by developing the lower level spaces in World War I-era buildings into viable spaces for small businesses. September 1994-March 1995.

Survey of Northeast businesses located on Central Avenue - Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 260 hours worked): The Holland Neighborhood Association submitted this proposal on behalf of a collaboration of neighborhood organizations bordering Central Avenue Northeast as well as the North End Business Association. The primary part of the project was to assemble all existing data for commercial property on Central Avenue into one comprehensive inventory that will be used for planning. January-May 1995. "Northeast Minneapolis Central Avenue Commercial corridor: Business Survey Report," by Joshua Aaron (NPCR 1010).

Home-based business network - Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): Powderhorn Park is home to many home-based businesses. The purpose of

this project was to locate home-based businesses and identify their needed resources in order to assist the neighborhood organization in coordinating communication and work to provide the resources required for these businesses to grow. June-September 1995. "Survey of Home-based Businesses in the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood," by Erin Mullen (NPCR 1023).

Market analysis for Glenwood Avenue - Harrison Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 130 hours funded): Glenwood Avenue has declined from the bustling neighborhood main street many residents remember. The purpose of this research project was to investigate possible businesses that could reinvigorate Glenwood. November 1995-January 1996. "Business Development Along Glenwood Avenue," by Jason Star (NPCR 1032).

Evaluation of a local job program - Stevens Square Community Organization (graduate research assistant; 390 hours funded): This project is an assessment of the efforts to recruit, train, and place community residents in jobs with a plating company in the neighborhood. Project began in February 1996.

Development of a neighborhood job database - People of Phillips (graduate research assistant; 390 hours funded): The Phillips neighborhood has high levels of poverty even though there are many diverse businesses in the area. This project will determine what job opportunities are available for neighborhood residents and create a neighborhood job database. Project began in June 1996.

Southeast Area employment study - Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): This project aims to contact employers regarding job opportunities and enter them into Job Link, a nonprofit employment database. Project began in June 1996.

CARAG home-based business study - Calhoun Area Residents Action Group (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant will identify and survey home-based businesses so their needs can be addressed as part of the neighborhood economic development plan. This project also includes development of a manual on how to conduct a home-based business survey that can be used by neighborhood organizations. Project began in June 1996.

Housing

Examination of housing adjacent to I35W and 62 Crosstown - Hale, Page, and Diamond Lake Community Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 264 hours worked): The research assistant investigated the factors affecting housing viability in the study area, and developed recommendations of strategies to assure long term stabilization to guide NRP implementation. March-July 1994.

Market demographics and housing in Jordan - Jordan Area Community Council (undergraduate research assistant; 480 hours funded): The research focused on the relationship of neighborhood housing stock to current market trends, particularly rental property. The student researched options for a rental property loan program. May 1994-August 1995.

Research on housing needs and interests for home improvement and homeownership programs - Whittier Alliance (graduate research assistant; 400 hours funded, 301 hours worked): Through external inspection of housing conditions in Whittier, combined with focus groups comprised of neighborhood residents, the researcher helped determine program priorities for Whittier's housing improvement and ownership programs. July-September 1994. "Whittier Homeownership Center Targeting Project," by Elizabeth Malaby and Tom Brady-Leighton (NPCR 1005).

Feasibility study for a community housing trust - Stevens Square Community Organization (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 260 hours worked): This project's aim was to research the feasibility and appropriateness of a neighborhood housing trust to carry out housing-related objectives identified in the neighborhood's NRP action plan. May 1994-March 1995. "Proposal for Creation of a Housing Partnership in the Stevens Square Community," by John Borders (NPCR 1009).

Neighborhood housing condition assessment - People of Phillips (undergraduate research assistant; 360 hours funded, 395 hours worked): The research assistant worked with neighborhood staff to develop criteria which can be used to assess houses for preservation or demolition. These criteria will then be used to create an inventory of vacant houses in Phillips. August 1994-March 1995.

Exterior property survey and improvement program design - Field-Regina-Northrop Neighborhood Revitalization Project (undergraduate research assistant; 400 hours funded, 428 hours worked): The research assistant surveyed residents about their concerns regarding exterior property conditions in order to determine their need for and interest in loans to help make improvements. Research also included collecting information on other neighborhood exterior improvement programs to help design a program for the Field-Regina-Northrop neighborhoods. June-September 1994. "Summary of Neighborhood Housing Programs Submitted to the Field-Regina-Northrup Neighborhood Revitalization Project," by Steve Johnson (NPCR 1008).

Revolving loan fund - East Harriet Farmstead Neighborhood Association (graduate research assistant; 390 hours funded, 413 hours worked): To assist the neighborhood organization in fully maximizing the NRP/MCDA funds available for a revolving loan fund, the research assistant investigated the available alternatives, including potential arrangements with commercial banks and nonprofit housing organizations. The student also identified ways to determine banks' interest, the best ways to service the fund, optimum interest rates, and recommended program guidelines. September 1994-February 1995. "Neighborhood Home Improvement Loan Fund Handbook," by Ryan Pulkrabek (NPCR 1013).

Housing inventory and prospects - Lind-Bohanon Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The project was to create an inventory of the housing stock, indicating which housing is likely to be on the market in the future. The research also included housing programs used by other neighborhoods and an indication of what needs to be addressed in the NRP plan. May-September 1995.

An analysis of factors influencing property value changes - McKinley Community (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research examined factors that influence property values, current trends in

housing values in the neighborhood, and possible explanations for these changes. Consideration of these factors will be used in planning for housing in the NRP plan. March-August 1995. "Neighborhood in Transition: An Analysis of Factors Influencing Property Value Change in the McKinley Neighborhood," by Deborah Raucher (NPCR 1019).

Historical assessment of Holland neighborhood housing deterioration - Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association (undergraduate research assistant; 390 hours funded, 391 hours worked): This research project focused on the question: Why has housing deterioration taken place in the Holland neighborhood, and what can be done about it? The project documented the extent of housing problems in the neighborhood over the long-term, and established which problems are actual and which are perceived. January-July 1995. "Historical Assessment of Holland Community Housing," by Sandra Paddock (NPCR 1027).

Rental property owners' 3-10 loan program - Whittier Alliance (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant identified rental property in the neighborhood that qualifies for 3-10 loan assistance and developed a marketing plan geared toward those owners. September-December 1995.

Scattered-site housing: where and why is it successful? - Fulton Neighborhood NRP Steering Committee (graduate research assistant; 420 hours funded): The purpose of this project is to research where scattered-site housing into primarily middle-class neighborhoods has been tried, and to identify what the Fulton neighborhood can do to ensure a successful integration of low-income tenants into the area. Project began in September 1995.

Holland housing inventory and database - Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant will help collect and assess property information for identifying housing priorities for the neighborhood organization. Project began in February 1996.

Marketing rehabilitated housing - Hawthorne Area Community Council (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant will help determine how the neighborhood organization can more effectively market its new and rehabilitated housing. Project began in March 1996.

Sheridan residential property survey - Sheridan Today and Yesterday (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant will assess neighborhood housing conditions using city data, site surveys, and resident interviews. Project began in June 1996.

Waite Park housing assessment - Waite Park NRP Steering Committee (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant will assess how well neighborhood housing serves the physical and life cycle needs of the residents. Project is on hold.

Transportation

Transportation development study - Linden Hills NRP Steering Committee (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant gathered information regarding traffic in Linden Hills, including pedestrian safety issues, the impact of space allocated to automobile use, and methods available for calming traffic. January-September 1995. "Neighborhood Transportation Planning Issues and Strategies in the Linden Hills Neighborhood," by John Levin (NPCR 1020).

Victory traffic study - Victory Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): This research addresses ways in which the neighborhood might cope with increasing traffic through the area. Project began in September 1995.

Bicycle accessibility - Audubon Improvement Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): This project determined ways in which Audubon Park might be integrated into the emerging city-wide bicycle lanes, paths, and parking areas. September 1995-April 1996. "Bicycles in Audubon Park," by Seth Spielman (NPCR 1033).

Pedestrian and bicycle study for the Stone Arch Bridge area - Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Association (two graduate research assistants; 490 hours funded, 516 hours worked): The research assistants analyzed traffic information for the area along the Mississippi River north of the Stone Arch Bridge, and prepared maps of the study area for planning by neighborhood residents. May-September 1995.

Linden Hills trolley way redevelopment - Linden Hills NRP Steering Committee (graduate research assistant; 390 hours funded): This research project will provide groundwork and develop possible uses, such as pedestrian and bicycle pathways, for the currently undeveloped land that used to be the trolley way. Project started in February 1996.

Central Avenue parking inventory - Central Avenue Steering Committee (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant will compile an inventory of parking use, management and adequacy along the Central Avenue corridor in Northeast Minneapolis. Project began in June 1996.

Bikeway planning study - Kenny Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): This project will address the needs, resources, and options for bikeways in Kenny. Project began in June 1996.

Parking and rent survey - Calhoun Area Residents Action Group (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant will inventory and map neighborhood off-street parking places and use, as well as rents in the neighborhood. Project began in June 1996.

Environment

Environmental profile - Marcy Holmes Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 265 hours worked): The student compiled an environmental profile that inventories the natural resources and specific environmental threats and pollution problems in the neighborhood. This is a baseline of information that the neighborhood organization will use to monitor industries and to conduct good neighbor negotiations with local businesses. March-July 1994. "Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Environmental Profile," by Jennifer Brown (NPCR 1007).

Environmental profile of companies in Columbia Park - Columbia Park Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 253 hours worked): Using the Marcy-Holmes Environmental Profile as a model, the project created an inventory of companies in Columbia Park to gain a better understanding of what they do and what their pollution status is. This will serve as a baseline for monitoring, as well as for possible good neighbor negotiations. January-June 1995. "Columbia Park Environmental Profile," by Scott Ek (NPCR 1016).

Bird foraging study - Kenny Neighborhood Association (graduate research assistant; 390 hours funded): Kenny residents have observed that Grass Lake has been harmed by surrounding construction, yet they lack the means to document this. A bird foraging study was conducted to train neighborhood volunteers to observe the activities of local birds near the lake. This will be an ongoing means of tracking the health of wildlife in the area. May-November 1995. "Kenny Neighborhood Association Wetland Bird Foraging: A Comparative Study," by Colleen Allen (NPCR 1025).

Overview of Grass Lake - Kenny Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): Grass Lake, a neighborhood wetland connected to other wetlands nearby, is threatened by plans for highway expansion. The purpose of this project was to learn how Grass Lake has been affected by past events in order to understand how future development may harm it. Other similar lakes were also studied. May 1995-January 1996. "Grass Lake: Past, Present, and Future," by Lanya Ross (NPCR 1031).

Mississippi River upper harbor terminal site study - Hawthorne Area Community Council (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): Working with Citizens for a Better Environment, the student will gather information neighborhood residents need in order to plan for the future of the upper harbor area, a place that is crucial to area community and economic development. Project began in June 1996.

Environmental overview - Marcy-Holmes Neighborhood Revitalization (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours): The project will update the neighborhood's environmental profile and identify opportunities and priorities for "Good Neighbor" negotiations to reduce the use of toxic materials by area businesses. Project began in June 1996.

Organizing

Evaluation of the Minneapolis Training Program for Neighborhood Organizers (undergraduate research

assistant; 620 hours funded, 556 hours worked) This study evaluated this new program to train neighborhoods organizers in Minneapolis. June-October 1995.

Outreach to Phillips neighborhood residents for lead contamination and prevention education - People of Phillips (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 317 hours worked): The student participated in the development of culturally specific (especially Hmong) neighborhood services to educate residents about the dangers of lead contamination and instruct them on appropriate prevention measures. October 1994-June 1995. "Phillips Neighborhood Lead Collaborative: final Report," by Chue Kong Thao (NPCR 1018).

Including single-parent families - Corcoran Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 260 hours worked): June-September 1995. This project explored ways to encourage participation of single-parents in neighborhood activities. "Single Parents Building Community in the Corcoran Neighborhood," by Mary Zannmiller (NPCR 1022).

Personnel manual for neighborhood groups (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The Neighborhood Revitalization Program has resulted in many neighborhood organizations hiring employees for the first time. These organizations have expressed a need for guidance in hiring, supervising, and meeting financial and legal requirements. This project involved creating a manual to meet this need. May-December 1995. "Personnel and Organization Management Manual for Minneapolis Neighborhood Organizers". (NPCR 1026).

Community involvement in schools - Fulton Neighborhood NRP Steering Committee (graduate research assistant; 520 hours funded): Identification of programs that have used local resources to improve student achievement was followed up by suggestions for what would be appropriate for Fulton neighborhood schools. September 1995-March 1996.

Crime and Safety

Resident-based anti-crime program study - Jordan Area Community Council (undergraduate research assistant; 200 hours funded, 144 hours worked): The research assistant investigated other anti-crime programs initiated by various resident groups to address street crimes and public violence. December 1994-February 1995. "Jordan Neighborhood Crime Research," by Bryan Crystal (NPCR 1017).

Inter-neighborhood crime study - Stevens Square Community Organization, Elliot Park Neighborhood Incorporated, Citizens for a Loring Park Community (one graduate research assistant, 260 hours and one undergraduate research assistant, 390 hours funded; undergraduate research assistant, 390 hours funded): The project investigated several problems hindering neighborhood efforts to improve livability including problem properties, poor functioning of the criminal justice system, and underuse of community-oriented policing. January-December 1995. "Neighborhood Livability in Minneapolis: Three Studies," by Stuart T. Alger, Shelly M. Hagglund, and Jacob Avidon (NPCR 1030).

Environmental design as a deterrent to crime - Bancroft Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research

assistant; 260 hours funded): The project included a review of literature on the use of environmental design to discourage crime in an urban setting. In addition, the research assistant identified possible areas in Bancroft that may benefit from changes in design. The results will be made available to residents and business owners interested in making improvements to their property. September 1995-March 1996. "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design in the Bancroft Neighborhood," by Eric Phillips (NPCR 1034).

Applicability of restorative justice - Stevens Square Community Organization, Downtown Minneapolis Residents Association, Elliot Park Neighborhood Inc. (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The student will research restorative justice and its potential applicability to deterrence of street crime in the area. Project began in June 1996.

History

Neighborhood history and brochure - Windom Community Council (graduate research assistant; 335 hours funded, 347 hours worked): In order to increase community awareness of the neighborhood's history and its place in the development of Minneapolis, historical research was put into a brochure used to educate and promote the neighborhood. June-September 1995.

Neighborhood history - Hale, Page, and Diamond Lake Community Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 262 hours worked): In the Hale, Page, and Diamond Lake community there are residents who are tired of city living and on the verge of moving to the suburbs. This project was to research and write a history of the neighborhood to be used to educate residents about the vitality of the area, as well as its long-term livability. June-September 1995. "Hale-Page-Diamond Lake: A Neighborhood History for Today," by Leah Chizek (NPCR 1021).

Survey of historic buildings - Nicollet Island-East Bank Project Area Committee (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): This project, a survey of historic building in the area, will provide a basis for discussion between the citizen organization and the local business association. September 1995-June 1996.

Neighborhood history - Stevens Square Community Organization (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The research assistant will research and write an architectural and social history of the area. Project began in June 1996.

Computer Resources

Neighborhood computer network feasibility study - Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition (graduate research assistant; 300 hours funded, 291 hours worked): In response to the rapid development of electronic networks, the student surveyed neighborhood organizations to determine their current computer capacity and applications, and assessed the utility of a computerized information exchange for neighborhoods. In addition, he documented existing computer networks and exchanges, their utility for neighborhood

organizations, and made recommendations for a Minneapolis neighborhood computer network. March-August 1994. "Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition," by Nolan Venkatrathnam (NPCR 1006).

Community Computer Advisory Committee (graduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 260 hours worked): This project is a continuation of the interest sparked by the Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition. The research assistant worked with neighborhood organizations to help them participate in the building and use of a computer network for sharing information, ideas and other resources. The goal was to move closer to getting a "critical mass" capable of continuing to network on its own. March-June 1995.

NRP matrix (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): The purpose of this project was to create a database of the tools and techniques neighborhoods have used in the development of their NRP plans. The information will be available to neighborhood organizations as a quick and easy reference. June-September 1995.

Other Issues

User survey for Loring Park - Citizens for a Loring Park Community (undergraduate research assistant; 360 hours funded, 233 hours worked): The student recruited volunteers and supervised them in a one-day count of park users and to construct an inventory of park uses. This information was used by a consultant to determine improvement priorities for the historic Loring Park. July-August 1994.

Neighborhood indicators - Lyndale Neighborhood Association (graduate research assistant; 360 hours funded, 390 hours worked): The research assistant worked with the leadership of the neighborhood organization, NRP staff, and members of the City Council to arrive at a consensus on which factors can be tracked to measure neighborhood health. The student then gathered data on those indicators for the past five years and presented it to the staff of the neighborhood organization and NRP. September-April 1995.

Survey compilation - People of Phillips (graduate research assistant; 30 hours funded, 25 hours worked): Analysis of neighborhood survey to assist with finalizing the neighborhood Action Plan. November 1994-April 1995.

Linden Hills community library survey - Linden Hills NRP Steering Committee (graduate research assistant; 390 hours funded, 393 hours worked): The research assistant conducted a survey of library users and residents living near the Linden Hills Community Library. The information was used to determine the most appropriate expansion plans for the library. January-May 1995. "Linden Hills Library Community Survey: Final Report," by Mark Weigle (NPCR 1014).

Inventory and survey of Franklin Avenue businesses - People of Phillips (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded, 234 hours worked): June-September 1995. The Franklin Avenue Task Force is working to plan for the revitalization of Franklin Avenue, and this inventory will guide the task force in determining whether to support more social service in the area. "Survey of Service Providers and Business on Franklin Avenue," by Lee O'Dell (NPCR 1024).

Models of successful community centers - Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association, NE Reps. and other northeast neighborhoods (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): This project includes identification of unmet need of social service and recreational services in the area and an overview of successful models for community centers. Project began in February 1996.

Art's role in neighborhood revitalization - Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (undergraduate research assistant; 260 hours funded): This research will seek out community organizations that have used the arts for economic development and revitalization. Project began in February 1996.

Child care barriers and opportunities - People of Phillips (graduate research assistant; 390 hours funded): The research assistant will describe the supply of existing child care resources, determine its adequacy for working parents in the neighborhood, and estimate future requirements for child care. Project began in June 1996.

APPENDIX H: YEAR ONE PROJECT FOLLOW-UP¹

TABLE 15: USEFULNESS OF PROJECTS

	Project was useful	Project was necessary ^a	Project was a catalyst ^b	Project was not useful
Bryant Neighborhood Org. Redev. Study	x			
East Harriet Farmstead Revolving Loan Fund	x	x		
Field, Regina, Northrup Business Survey	x	x		
Field, Regina, Northrup Housing Survey	x	x		
Hale, Page, Diamond Lake Crosstown Area Survey				x ²
Henn. Ave. Task Force Background Research	x			
Jordan Rental Property Research	x	x		
Longfellow Lake Street Study	x			
Loring Park Park Use Study	x	x		
Lyndale Neighborhood Indicators				x ³
Marcy-Holmes Home-based Business	x	x	x	

¹The data for the tables in this appendix were gathered from telephone interviews with neighborhood project supervisors and/or other appropriate people regarding the usefulness of projects from Year One. Interviews were conducted between June 12-18, 1996. Of the 22 completed Year One projects, I was able to gather information on 20 (91%). A project is a Year One project if it was approved for funding between 10/1/93 and 9/30/94. The assessments reported here were made by the informant.

²Though the results of this project did not become a working or well-known part of the organization's efforts, the student was highly regarded and hired to be an organizer for the neighborhood. Because of her continued presence in the neighborhood the results of her work were not written up in a report since she was there to convey the information. Now that she no longer works for the neighborhood organization the information appears to have gone with her.

³The project was completed but the neighborhood organization did not find the report to be useful.

	Project was useful	Project was necessary ^a	Project was a catalyst ^b	Project was not useful
Marcy-Holmes Environmental Profile	x			
Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition	x		x	
PERRIA/SEBA SE Business Study	x	x	x	
Phillips Lead Outreach Study	x			
Powderhorn Park Lake Street Study	x	x	x	
Stevens Square Urban Village				x ⁴
Stevens Square Housing Trust Study	x			
Whittier Home Loan Project	x			
Whittier Home-based Business	x		x	
Total Neighborhoods 20 (%)	17 (85)	8 (40)	5 (25)	3 (15)

Note: the total frequencies and percentages do not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

a. This designation means that during the follow-up interview the informant said that the project needed to get done in order for the organization to move forward with neighborhood revitalization. In other words, if an NPCR research assistant had not done the work it would have had to get done in another way. Usually this was accompanied by a statement that the neighborhood organization would still be struggling to get it done.

b. This designation means that during the follow-up interview the informant said that the information gathered during project was instrumental in motivating neighborhood activity on a particular issue.

⁴The student did not complete the project due to personal problems.

TABLE 16: WAYS PROJECTS WERE USED⁵

	To Set Up Program	General Planning	Directly in NRP Plan ^e	Baseline Info for Decision- making	Given to Consultant	Advocacy/ Organizing
Bryant Neighborhood Org. Redev. Study				x	x	
East Harriet Farmstead Revolving Loan Fund	x			x		
Field, Regina, Northrup Housing Survey	x		x			
Field, Regina, Northrup Business Survey			x	x		x
Henn. Ave. Task Force Background Research				x	x	
Jordan Rental Property Research	x			x		x
Longfellow Lake Street Study	x			x		x
Loring Park Park Use Study		x		x	x	x
Marcy-Holmes Home-based Business			x	x		x
Marcy-Holmes Environmental Profile				x		x
Neighborhood Resource Center Coalition				x		x
PERRIA/SEBA SE Business Study		x		x	x	x
Phillips Lead Outreach Study						x
Powderhorn Park Lake Street Study		x		x		x

⁵The categories used in this table were created out of open-ended responses from telephone interviews with neighborhood project supervisors and/or other appropriate people regarding the usefulness of the projects from Year One.

	To Set Up Program	General Planning	Directly in NRP Plan ^c	Baseline Info for Decision- making	Given to Consultant	Advocacy/ Organizing
Stevens Square Housing Trust Study		x				
Whittier Home-based Business		x		x		x
Whittier Home Loan Project				x		
Total Neighborhoods 17 (%)	4 (24)	5 (29)	3 (18)	14 (82)	4 (24)	11 (65)

Note: the total frequencies and percentages do not equal 100% due to multiple responses.

c. Though virtually all the projects in this table were used in some aspect of NRP activities, this designation refers to those projects that were described as important to formulating the organization's NRP Plan.

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH FOR CHANGE CONFERENCE MATERIALS

Research for Change: Strengthening Community/University Partnerships
March 7, 1996

SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY

8:00 - 9:00

Registration (Coffee and Rolls)
NPCR Project Showcase

9:00 - 10:00

Welcome - Fred Smith
Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) Overview - Kris Nelson
Neighborhood project presentation - Bart Putney and Stu Alger
Faculty project presentation - Ed Goetz and Karen Reid
Introduction to morning breakaway session - Kris Nelson

10:15- 11:45

Breakaway sessions by constituency - see group assignment sheet for rooms

12:00-1:00

Lunch and Keynote address by Jose Calderon, Pitzer College, Claremont, CA
"Research for Change: Ethics, Cultures, and Realities"

1:15-2:15

Breakaway sessions - see group assignment sheet for rooms

2:30-3:30

Reconvene to report back and receive final comments from Jose Calderon

RESEARCH FOR CHANGE CONFERENCE NOTES

MORNING BREAKAWAY SESSIONS

Morning breakaway discussion sessions were divided by constituency group: community organization, students, and educational staff. Each group was asked to consider the following questions:

- Why is community-based research important?
- What are the elements of successful community-based research?
- What are the barriers to successful community-based research?
- What are the resources needed for community based-research?

The following notes summarize this discussion.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Why is community-based research important?

- Need input/driven by community.
- For NRP neighborhoods need proof to justify plan.
- Neighborhood has good ideas -- needs a lot of research.
- Community group owns information.
- Resources/funding to make possible.
- Issue of neighborhood needs to be identified.
- Research adds legitimacy to common sense.
- Separates myth from fact.
- Everyone in neighborhood has certain expertise -- need it all.
- Helps with leadership develop -- proof.
- Grounds research in reality.
- Gets attention.
- May lead to more University resources.

What are the elements of successful community-based research?

- Ongoing community involvement.
- Flexibility.
- Identify who needs to be involved first before process for research decided.
- Creative/open to new ideas.
- Capacity of mentors to link student researcher to information/resources that provides depth -- gives legitimacy.
- Total impact.
- Implementation after research.
- Transfer of research skills to community members.
- Capacity of research intern work independently -- motivated -- passion for this work, willingness to ask for help.
- If research fits into their own academic goals/value system, passion for this kind of work.
- Need to transfer knowledge to community.
- Question how information will be used -- needs to be kept in mind throughout.
- Use tools available to community.
- Needs to be valued by everyone -- government, universities, etc.
- Information will get out to community if community is involved

- Community needs to feel like they have an investment.

What are the barriers to successful community-based research?

- Transitional nature of community groups.
- Depends on volunteer time commitment.
- Getting community members involved.
- Make sure it's truly community-based, not just one staff or one volunteer.
- Different ideas that community and university people have.
- Community people micro-managed by small group of neighborhood leaders need to let go and let people do what they want.
- Fear of dispersing power (knowledge is power).
- NPCR supervisory structure little recourse if things don't go well.
- Finding committed, skilled undergraduate students.
- Not a status quo model, not many examples of how to do this kind of research -- overcome problems.
- Facilitate continued and broader community involvement through communication.
- Getting skills to neighborhood volunteers to supervise.
- Universities covet their independence; confusion of influence of government and community.
- NRP is a barrier because of rules put on it -- try to stop certain projects.
- Lines get blurred between research and organizing -- not strict research -- may push researcher outside areas they feel comfortable.
- Even more important for community to be involved -- don't lose neighborhood contacts.
- Community feels researcher will do research for them not get involved.
- Distrust of universities/researchers.
- Fear of conflict.

What are the resources needed for successful community-based research?

- Resources to support the volunteers financially for their time.
- Resources to get volunteers involved (organizer).
- Mandate from funding sources to require community-based research.
- Child care, meals, volunteer appreciation, transportation.
- More faculty committed to community research.
- Need to integrate NPCR model into university/college systems -- could continue if NPCR lost funding.
- Job fair model to provide forum for graduate students and community residents to match research interests with community needs.
- More individuals being trained in community based models -- neighborhoods doing for free now, others need to help provide resources.
- Neighborhoods and students need more training on how to work together.
- More time for longer projects.
- Skills development -- how to hold community forum, write project proposal, etc.
- Need to know what's happening when, what's out there.
- Get more neighborhood groups on line or other forums of communication so neighborhoods with similar issues can find out research from other neighborhoods and build on it.
- Resources to bring neighborhoods together to share information and support each other.
- Support from foundations to implement.
- Tighter relationship between academic/university foundations and communities.
- Money.
- Hope.
- Have a long view -- change does not happen over night.

EDUCATIONAL STAFF GROUPS

Why is community-based research important?

- Hands-on learning for students.
- How communities perceive issues.
- Initial skills for neighborhood groups in defining issues.
- Help define action agenda for community, clarify that's important.
- Identifies real issues of a group of people instead of letting academy set agenda.
- Research can help community identify its strengths.
- Can be community building.
- Can help University fulfill its service mission.
- Builds social capital.
- Helps change community opinions of higher education institutions.
- Potential of expanding students' career choices and future involvement in community life, focusing academic work.
- Reflects "messiness" of real world.

What are the elements of successful community-based research?

- All players involved in shaping the research project over time.
- Community needs to feel their concerns are driving the project.
- The community gets its questions answered.
- Recognizes ethics of community-based research (humility, respect, etc. by the academy; Parker Palmer) and community recognizes ethics of researcher and research methodology.
- Objectivity is critically examined.
- Clarity of which/what community is being served by the research.
- There are not structural contradictions between the university and the neighborhood being helped with research.
- Some form of connection between the community (cultural, racial, geographic) and the researcher ("fire in the belly") beyond formal bonds.
- Support of University for transformational interests of faculty.
- Valid research methodology, but in service to community questions.
- Awareness of power dynamics within community as well as between various "communities."
- Willingness of community to do another project.
- Lessons useful beyond participating groups.
- Did something change?

What are the barriers to successful community-based research?

- Institutional barrier that rewards academic publication rather than useful information.
- Equating "academy" with actions of specific institution.
- Trust building takes a while.
- Can build partnerships without high level buy-in of administration.
- Funding areas are set by funders not community.
- Structure of research is contrary to community interests (double blind, etc.).
- Requires a knowledge base of community when dealing with cross-cultural, cross-class research.
- Harder, requires greater flexibility, less control over schedule.

What are the resources needed for successful community-based research?

- Funding.
- Identification of "real questions" of a community.
- Classroom resources (including interests and experiences of students).
- Longer periods of time than one quarter.
- Supportive technology.
- Access to networks in community and within academic institutions.
- Feedback to constituencies involved.
- Tradition in some disciplines of field research (e.g. social work).

STUDENTS

Why is community-based research important?

- Trend towards local and community policy implementation.
- Good to be ready.
- National agenda pushing toward local decision-making.
- Local participation is important "giving a voice" and information.
- Credible, real-world information.
- Local knowledge beyond the gut level.

What are the benefits to students/researchers?

- Interviewing skills.
- Learning to bridge communication gaps.
- Learning importance of evaluation.
- Being able to document how things occur.
- Dealing with frustration.
- Not being able to take incomplete.
- Connect to reality.
- Change in attitude about research.
- Change attitude about school.
- Learning neighborhood politics.

What is the value of the research?

- Organizations were "demystified" about research.
- Local knowledge is important.
- Increased community involvement.
- New resources brought in.
- Forced some structure.
- Recognizing people's abilities.
- More resources.
- Providing outside check.
- Community involvement already taking place helps.
- Clarity in plan.
- Project development in the pre-planning stage.
- Having paid staff.

Is there local impact on the research?

- Direction set by organization.
- Increase community ownership.
- Help set directions and do data collection.
- Going through process helps organization develop skills.

What are the elements of successful community-based research?

- Community involvement already taking place helps.
- Clarity in plan.
- Project development in the pre-planning stage.

What are the barriers to successful community-based research?

- Lack of agreement in the neighborhood.
- Lack of clarity in the beginning.
- Being seen as staff or from University/outside inhibits project.
- Time, length is a problem.
- Expectation about students.
- Skepticism about bringing outsiders into the neighborhood. Better if done locally.
- Not being empowered to take a leadership role.
- Required to do administrative tasks.
- NRP brings people looking for money with less neighborhood commitment.

Recommendations/Resources

- Valuable student skills could be useful to other students and projects.
- Models to follow.
- Mentors are useful.
- Help with direction.
- Project progress.
- MN Center for Survey Research.
- Networking @ CURA.
- Kris emails.
- Resources accessible to students.
- University can act as a protection.
- Examine how this research is sold to communities and how it will be evaluated/utilized.
- Training for neighborhood on how to use the research.
- Packet of information on how to develop a research plan.
- Standards of good practice guidelines should be developed.
- Compare NPCR projects to CURA projects that are not NRP-related.

AFTERNOON BREAKAWAY SESSIONS

Afternoon breakaway discussion sessions integrated student, community and educational staff participants. Each group was asked to identify the three:

Most important elements of successful community-based research
Most urgent needs (resources) for community-based research
Biggest barriers

Groups were also asked to identify strategies.

The following notes summarize these discussions.

GROUP I

Elements of Success:

- Community sets research and evaluation agenda and remains involved in process including research methodology.
- Community recognizes valid research as a way to address problems.
- Mutual exchange of skills and knowledge.
- Research is designed to inform decisions (change).

Needs/Resources (Barriers - Lack of these resources):

- \$
- People with passion.
- Educational institutions.
- Community.
- Organization.
- Educational institution.
- Community.

- Common language/trust.
- Time.

Strategies:

- Better dissemination of findings/results.
- More research/technology skill transference.
- Involve community in setting strategies and policies.
- Media (TV, major and neighborhood newspapers).
- Feed research results into ongoing community conferences, meetings.

GROUP II

Elements of Success:

- Assume that there is clarity on who is the community and who represents it.
- Who is representing the community?
 1. Stakeholders have equal power: academic <--> community people; all contribute.
 2. How to use the research for implementation.
 3. Continual community involvement from conception --> implementation.

Needs/Resources (Barriers - Lack of these resources):

1. Time - in terms of amount and duration; necessary for relationship building.
2. Explicit mutual benefits for community and researcher.
3. \$ \$ --->
 - transportation
 - child care
 - organization
 - advertising (outreach)FOOD

BARRIERS

1. Institutional reward and training system.
2. Resistance and distrust of researchers.
3. Different ways of communicating; language.

GROUP III

Elements of Success:

- Community has to be defined.
- Community help process it and redefine it.
- Community involved.
- Identification - define.
- Define process - implement.
- Compiled results - execute.
- Action steps.
- Burning desire to understand.
- Community should be involved in understanding and selecting depth of "community-basedness vs. community focused"
- Elements must include all community - not shallowly selective.
- Conflict should be an element (between parts of community, researcher & community) (if trying to get at change).
- Possibility of continued partnership.
- Consequences for action.

Needs/Resources (Barriers - Lack of these resources):

- Money.
- Hope.
- Time.
- Commitment (investment).
- Have a long view (change doesn't happen over night) (but agree upon it through an inclusive process).
- Patience by all.
- Understanding that benefit comes from process as well as "result."
- All above for implementation (or at least as identified).
- Acknowledgment.
- Humor.
- Technology (equipment and training).
- Relationships.
- People.
- Passion.
- People involved.
- Leadership.
- Understanding/tolerance.

Barriers

- As you increase community-based vs. community-focused it increases need for resources.
- Organizing - involving.
- Publicizing - admin.
- Implementation (or futile).
- Law (NRP).
- lack of community trust (both ways + or each other).
- Time (students, supervisors, community).
- Role identification.
- Expectations.
- Bureaucracy/slow moving (causes loss of energy/commitment).
- Class.

- Fear of conflict.
- Language (actual, "neighborhood" vs. "academic").
- Lack of hope.
- Cultural.
- "This is the way we do it" inertia.
- Lack of community responsibility: for each other.
- Experiences.
- Clarification of problem.
- Tunnel vision.
- Bad habit.
- Political intent (known/unknown).
- Methodology.
- Lack of inclusiveness.

GROUP IV

Elements of Success:

- Community drives project/issues.
- Potential for students to integrate learning service and research.
- Result has implied action steps for community change.

Needs/Resources (Barriers - lack of these resources):

Most Urgent Needs

- Change our funding models - more fluid (funding <--> needs of community).
- Relationships.
- Broaden understanding of all components of a research project & funding required.
- Communication/feedback loop.

Barriers

- Culture of higher education systems.
- Difficulty of community groups to bring in complete representation of their community (full) and capacity to implement
- Orienting students to "community organizing" and to specific org.

Strategies:

- Put community issues in the front of students minds.
- Set up job fair to meet with community organizers.
- Build in expectation for service.
- Learning.
- Give them credit.
- Look at ways to "incentify"
- Community participation.
- Offer seminar on effective working w/ communities for all new research students.
- Models (Antioch Univ, Evergreen, United Theological).
- Planned time for students/researchers/communities to reflect on experience (Augsburg).
- Closer initial relationship w/ NRP groups (during design phase) ex. id faculty who could work with a specific

group.

- Integrate with other funding (Dept. of C, F & L) Sources (local ***) to work toward implement.
- Look at where academic funding comes from - begin to influence focus (towards community/university).
- Build in way for communities to come together to learn from one another.

GROUP V

Elements of Success:

top three:

- Ongoing involvement of community- initiated by total community.
- Integrity.
- Commitment to meet identified needs and build knowledge.

other elements:

- Flexible.
- Acknowledgment of political intent.
- Invokes passion.
- Reciprocal relationships.
- Preparation before project.

Needs/Resources (Barriers - Lack of these resources):

Needs (Resources)

- Money for students, faculty and community mentors.
- Valuing community involvement.

Barriers

Most urgent:

- How do we shape projects to get students of color involved?
- Need to expand the program to non-NRP organizations (cause-based, other than community organizations).
- Lack of focus on social services and delivery issues.
- Vagueness of job description - mixed expectations/bias.

Other barriers:

- Faculty without community connections, not able to participate.
- Bureaucratic restrictions.